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The Construction of Identity – The Italian Canadian Case

by

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ABSTRACT

The Construction of Identity – The Italian Canadian Case

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A thesis presented on the evaluation of how the identity of Italian Canadians is formed in the Canadian multicultural society by looking at differences between individual identity and constructed identities influenced by a dominant discourse in which issues of power and hierarchy are addressed. The analysis is done by looking at the Canadian "Multicultural" society through Italian Canadian writers who give voice to the minority group and a sense of self representation by addressing questions of identity, media representations through films and documentaries that portray Italian Canadians through the eyes of the dominant discourse and minorities within the Canadian context, and the community by discussing issues of accommodation/assimilation and the community reaction to what their identity is defined as, as well as what Italian Canadians contribute to Canadian society.

PREFACE

As individuals travelling through this constant running clock of life, we each face moments which define our lives. Be it through transitions or life changing experiences, we each can define ourselves by the state we were before and after. These changes function as new beginnings which often times can be difficult as what is left of you from prior to these moments are memories and a lost feeling of what was and who you were before. The creation of this work embodies this idea, the idea of pre and post and how moments can change the individual you are and brings for the birth of a new person, one more complex and dynamic, one who experiences the effects of different identities.

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Introduction

It should be somewhat disconcerting that in Canadian society (a nation which prides itself on the official Multiculturalism policy adopted under Trudeau) the position of the immigrant within this context is often overlooked in terms of their role in society's sphere of power. The 'immigrant' within Canada plays many vital roles. Not only are their economic benefits made through this process but more importantly the immigrant functions within society by diffusing the bicultural (French and English) stereotype and sustaining an image of Canada as being a tolerant nation; a nation that is open to persons of diverse ethnic origins who come to Canada in search of a 'Canadian dream'. Like the American dream, the Canadian dream exists as a similar vision. The immigrant comes to Canada in search of a new level of prosperity, one which they were unable to reach in their homeland. Although the politics of multiculturalism are very important for Canada's international reputation, this topic is not without serious issues, ones that merit an in-depth and critical analysis. The immigrant's experience in Canada is rather fragmented. An individual that leaves his homeland in order to find a new life in another country always finds himself in an intermediary position. Despite their best efforts they will never fully form or become part of the active society within their new context because they will always be considered ethnic and at the same time, they renounce part of their own native identity. When we speak of the "immigration discourse", what we are referring to it is the confrontation of two cultures and how the clashing of these cultures paves the way to the creation of a new identity. The goal of this analysis is to demonstrate the fluid nature of identity and how it is constructed in a process which is never static.

Chapter 1: The Construction of Identity

In order to do any proper analysis it is critical to contextualize the discourse in question. Within the Canadian context there is a myth or illusion being upheld and that is the illusion of Multiculturalism masking a bicultural system. For the purpose of this analysis Multiculturalism (with the capital 'M') will refer to state Multiculturalism and all aspects that have to do with official Multiculturalism, while multiculturalism (lower case 'm') looks at multiculturalism as a lived reality in society beyond the political definitions. As discussed in Selling illusions by Neil Bissoondath which looks at Multiculturalism in Canada and his own refusal of state imposed politics of Multiculturalism, which as defined by Department of Canadian Heritage is,

> "Canadian multiculturalism is fundamental to our belief that all citizens are equal. Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding, and discourages ghettoization, hatred, discrimination and violence. Through multiculturalism, Canada recognizes the potential of all Canadians encouraging them to integrate into their society and take an active part in its social, cultural, economic and political affairs".[1]

The 'hyphenated' Canadian is constantly searching for a position in this society. Having a policy like Multiculturalism gives a false sense of belonging by allowing a space in the sphere of power for immigrants however this position is characterized by an identity that has

[1] http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/multi/what-multi_e.cfm

been constructed by another. If you will, the immigrant's experience is characterized by this constructed new identity. The formation that occurs is very complex as it deals with the scripting of the individual. The individual becomes lost and exists somewhere between the clashing of two diverse societies which only adds to his/her identification as an outsider. Italian Canadian critic Marino Tuzi states, "Italian Canadian identity is shaped by a given social context and is not represented as a unitary concept or cohesive reality" (Writing the Minority Subject 7). In this analysis, the case of the Italian Canadian or Italo-Canadian is examined in order to see how a new identity is formed through a process that transcends from the individual to a formative and common identity. This construction of identity leads to the marginalized position held by ethnic minorities in a supposedly multicultural society.

Relations of power and identity

To begin this discussion it is necessary to address the question of power and the role it plays in terms of who has the power, who seeks this power, and perhaps most importantly how one maintains this power. In the book Happy Slaves, William Anselmi and Kosta Gouliamos begin their dialogue with a discussion of power. The question that initiates the discussion is "Where are you from?" According to the authors, this question is fundamentally a question of power relations between individuals. They go into detail explaining how this simple question manages to establish a power relationship giving one individual a position of power and control over the other based simply on their response to the question. Anselmi states:

> ""Where are you from?" – I would still contend that there is no innocence in it, because the power structures have been absorbed and repeated in the verbal exchange. In other words, there is always a hierarchy of power at work; so it doesn't

matter if both these people recognize each other's ethnicity. I use the word "ethnic" in the sense that it is used in Canada, insofar as we distinguish it from the two so-called founding nations. It's always there, that power structure, the power relations; it's embedded in racism and revealed in racist discourse" (9)

One of the concepts introduced in this quotation is the idea of the founding nations. Canadian history is entrenched by the presence of two founding nations, which colonized this country. Great Britain and France each laid claim to the land of Canada and as such continue to enforce their presence in the country as the dominant ones. As previously stated, although Canada may maintain an image of multiculturalism, embedded at the heart of Canadian society is the politics of the founding nations, the politics of biculturalism. As Anselmi and Gouliamos state,

> "Canada stands out as a model of a country where diverse cultures are meant to be expressive of a heterogeneous whole. Yet, the constitutional ambiguity of the representation of two *founding nations* vs the *ethnic mosaic*, is constitutive of a differentiation in principle and practice of the dominant and nomadic discourses." (Mediating Culture 120)

The idea of biculturalism can be most obviously identified by Canada's two official languages both French and English. Canada, a product of the colonization period in Europe has never fully released its ties from its colonizing power. Still a member of the Commonwealth, Canada is still part of the British Empire while also being a sovereign nation. Since the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, Britain became the dominant power in Canada but the French still held a strong presence due to its role in the founding of Canada. In the role of colonizer, the British and French became the "civilizing" presence in a foreign land. The colonized social realities of Canada, mainly the native presence, became

engulfed in European culture and dominated. Their position in terms of power was marginalized and from that point forward, any 'foreign' presence in Canada was marginalized with relation to the dominant British and French presence. Tuzi describes the relationship between mainstream and Italian Canadians as such, "The many connections between the two cultures are tentative because the Italian Canadian subject continues to reposition himself/herself in a dynamic and pluralistic urban environment" (Writing the Minority Subject 7). The dynamics within this context are even more complex, as the French hold a slightly marginalized position in relation to the British. Due to the complex nature of this discourse, for the purposes of this analysis, those of English origins shall be referred to as the "dominant discourse" in Canada with the exception of Quebec where the French Quebecois are the dominant discourse.

The question "Where are you from?" in this discourse of power is central to illustrating the construction of identity and how it relates to the bicultural context of Canadian society. Let us break down the question by placing it in context of a practical situation. An Italian Canadian immigrant is introduced to an individual of English or British descent with no noted accent, or socially naturalized accent, that is an accent which has become part of the landscape and is therefore invisible, or one that is not heard as such. Their family has been in Canada for generations and has no apparent ties to any overseas ancestry. The Italian immigrant has been here for a few years, and has a noticeable accent. When asked where he is from he responds by saying Italy. At this moment, his 'individual identity' is that of an Italian. It is important to remember that this individual identity encompasses all of the cultural and historical aspects that come from his culture. When he responds to the question posed, the "true" Canadian begins to construct an identity for the Italian based solely on their perception of that particular ethnic group, which can be defined

as the 'common identity' of the Italian. The member of the dominant discourse immediately places himself in a higher position of power over that of the immigrant. This identity is based on a hierarchy, one that places those persons who are part of the dominant discourse higher than those who do not fit the dominant prototype. This construction in turn, changes according to the ethnic group that is being addressed. For example, since 9/11 those persons of Arabic or Muslim origins are identified/associated with terrorisms and terrorist activity by those of the dominant discourse. To expand upon Anselmi's idea and the hierarchy of power, it is necessary to discuss fluidity, as it exists across this hierarchy. Let us place the dominant discourse at the top of the hierarchy and every other ethnic group at the bottom (remembering that this construction changes depending on the ethnic group question). Since 9/11 individuals of Arabic or Muslim backgrounds or even whom have physical traits that could resemble those of persons of said backgrounds will be labeled as 'terrorists' from those of the American dominant discourse. It is possible to develop and extend Anselmi's ideas and the hierarchy of power, by discussing the fluidity across this hierarchy. The dominant discourse has all the power and makes all the decisions in the society. Ethnic groups are in a constant struggle to lessen the gap that exists between them and those in power. The immigrants, travel to a foreign land to obtain the dream that their own country cannot or has not been able to offer them. Meanwhile those of the dominant discourse already encompass that dream. As such, the immigrant strives to be closer to the dominant discourse on the hierarchy of power. In the essay ""No Color Barrier" Italians, Race, and Power in the United States" by Thomas A. Guglielmo, He looks at the idea of color, race, ethnicity and how depending on various factors within these categories, one is able to maneuver in the dominant society of America. He discusses how upon the early mass migration from Italy to America, there seemed to exist anti-Italian sentiment based on a questioning on whether or not Italians were white (30).

Obviously white was the color of the dominant discourse and as such immigrants who were considered white had an easier time upon immigration. Overall Italians were accepted as white as such,

> "This widespread acceptance was reflected most concretely in Italian's ability to immigrate to the United States and become citizens, work certain jobs, live in certain neighborhoods, join certain unions, marry certain partners, patronize certain movie theatres, restaurants, saloons, hospitals, summer camps, parks, beaches, and settlement houses" (30).

As per this illustration the fact that there seemed to be some sort of common thread between those of the dominant discourse and Italian – whiteness, allows for the minority to have access to certain social spaces because there exists a familiarity between the two. This works to the advantage of the minority in that it allows them to scale higher on the hierarchy of power. Guglielmo quotes sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva regarding his idea of a "radicalized social system",

> "The placement of people in racial categories involves some form of hierarchy that produces definite social relations between the races. The race placed in the superior position tends to receive greater economic remuneration and access to better occupations and/or prospects in the labor market, occupies a primary position in the political system, is granted higher social estimation…often has a license to draw physical (segregation) as well as social (racial etiquette) boundaries between itself and other races, and receives what Du Bois calls a "psychological wage." The totality of these radicalized social relations and practices constitutes (a radicalized social system)" (31).

This revisits and reinforces the idea of the power hierarchy and the positioning of ethnic groups along this hierarchy where the goal is consistently to reach as closely as possible a position of parity with the dominant discourse.

The question to address then becomes - how can this be achieved? An immigrant has two identities at work at this time; their individual identity and a constructed identity. The only way for said individual to become closer to the position of the dominant discourse is by becoming an entity that is familiar to those of the dominant discourse, and eliminating the unfamiliarity. In other words, they must assume the constructed identity that obviously results in the manipulation and distortion of the individual's identity. Before furthering this discussion it is important to discuss the ideas of familiar and unfamiliar. Something which is unfamiliar is misunderstood and as such that which is not understood cannot be controlled. What cannot be controlled becomes something that evokes fear. Fear in the end must be eliminated or pacified, and in order to eliminate this fear it must become familiar. For example, during the process of colonization many of the activities that the indigenous people took part in were, at times, mirrored in witchcraft or superstition. In addition, their ceremonies of rights often were so different to anything the white man had seen that it frightened them. In order to eliminate the fear of the unfamiliar the dominant discourse tightened their control through violence and/or religion. It is important to clarify once again that the immigrant will never actually have a position of equality to that of the dominant discourse. In fact the fluidity across the hierarchy of power can also change depending on the image that those of the dominant discourse have of the particular group in question. As a result we can say that where a relationship of power is created, so begins the process of labeling. In order to initiate a discussion of this process it is important to depart from the individuals' identity and how this leads to the constructed common identity.

Individual Identity

It becomes crucial to ask which factors make up the individual Italian Canadian identity. This question is a very polemic one, as the question of what exactly is Canadian identity is constantly under debate. Canada uses the cultural mosaic model for issues surrounding identity as opposed to the melting pot model that neighboring American counterparts use, therefore the idea of who/what it means to be Canadian is very difficult to identify with any precision. What comes into question is whether or not it is better for immigrants to assimilate into the dominant discourse's culture, which ultimately means they are slowly weaned away from their individual identity. Their individual identity gradually transforms from being that of hyphenated Canadian to becoming simply Canadian, signaling the complete loss of their previous individual identity. In the United States, the practice of assimilation is almost comparable to an amendment in terms of how it Americanizes immigrants. The hyphenated American indeed becomes only an American. An important aspect that must be addressed is the way in which individual identity is manipulated. Each one of us has a story that is created from our upbringing, and our education which forms our ethnicity. Each individual has a type of ethnicity yet, according to Immanuel Wallerstein 'ethnicity' is a capitalistic construction which served the purpose to fragment the Marxist notion of class into something more manageable, but the problem that exists in Canada and the United States is that those who form part of the dominant discourse do not see themselves as ethnic. Even if they too have roots that come from foreign lands, the discourse regarding who has the power does not make that association with their ethnicity and as such creates the dichotomy of 'us' versus 'them'.

Through this process, any person that comes from another country to North America is ironically seen as being ethnic; and being ethnic is categorically and characteristically

lower on the hierarchy than being from the dominant discourse, for example the way in which the Reform party discussed immigrants and settlers.[2] In order to return to the idea of individual identity, these individuals whom are "ethnic" all have entrenched in them the aforementioned history and cultural upbringing of their native country and ethnic group; which gives them authentic qualities from that group. Those of the dominant discourse see themselves like authentic Canadians or Americans and every ethnic group has authentic attributes that form part of their individual identity. Authenticity, though a disputable concept, can still be utilized to show that such a notion incorporates many aspects of the everyday life and culture that a person lives in and subsequently shapes their identity. In the book Inauthentic: the Anxiety over Culture and Identity by Vincent Cheng, he looks at the idea of authenticity and identity. He states:

> "As Chinese American writer Gish Jen notes, "We wonder who we are – What does it mean to be Irish-American, Cuban-American, Armenian-American? ... Indeed nothing seems more typically American than to obsess about identity. Can so many people truly be so greatly confused? We feel very much part of the contemporary gestalt." In the presence of such a gestalt of confusion and anxiety, she notes, we search for the recognizably genuine and then "how awed we feel in the presence of tradition, of authenticity" (2).

One of the definitions of *authentic* according to the Oxford dictionary is an "adjective of undisputed origin". This definition and concept of authenticity, Cheng would argue is important because it speaks of an original familiarity that exists. In our discourse, the

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[2] For a discussion of this issue, see Steve Patten. "The Reform Party's re-imagining of the Canadian nation. " Journal of Canadian Studies 34.1 (1999): 27-51. CBCA Reference. ProQuest. 27 Feb.2008 <http://www.proquest.com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/>

individual has cultural authenticity that defines them as an Italian. We can include in this: language, food, art, and various traditions specific to Italian culture. As Cheng describes, for individuals of the dominant discourse it is this authenticity that makes ethnics different; using these differences as a means of differentiating and categorizing people. In the book Elusive Margins, Anselmi and Gouliamos speak of the displacement of ethnicity and make use of a graphical representation in order to clearly show the binary representation of identity (71-72). They state, "The diagram questions the binary representations of identity, that is, the identity left behind (homeland) and the identity acquired (the immigrant's new land/multiculturalism)" (71-72). The diagram illustrates how the immigrant or emigrated individual has an identity that is constructed from their lived experience in their homeland prior to emigration whereby in this time they miss the experiences of their new country's culture. After immigration the loss of these experiences cannot be recuperated and they begin to formulate a new identity from what is inarguably a displaced space. At the same time they are missing the experiences occurring in their homeland, which is now also displacing them from that culture. If we concentrate on the experiences that they themselves bring prior to emigration, we can look at this space like their space of authenticity, therefore when they arrive in Canada this authenticity forms part of the individual identity. In the article, "Race, Ethnicity, and Expressive Authenticity: Can White People Sing the Blues?" Joel Rudinow addresses authenticity:

> "Authenticity is a value – a species of genus credibility. It's the kind of credibility that comes from having the appropriate relationship to an original source… "authentic/inauthentic" distinction is dichotomous, the alternatives both mutually exclusive and exhaustive, and the appropriate relationship is one of identity" (129).

The idea of the displaced identity graph can be applied to this example of non African American playing the blues to explain the idea of missing history: Rudinow says:

> "The experiential access argument says in effect that one cannot understand the blues or authentically express oneself in the blues unless one know what it's like to live as a black person in America, and one cannot know this without being one…Members of other communities may take an interest in this experience and even empathize with it, but they have no direct access to the experience and therefore cannot fully comprehend or express it" (132).

As a result, an individual of the dominant discourse that seeks to create one identity of the Italian-Canadian does not have the knowledge to understand part of their culture, of there individual identity. The Italian Canadian is a source of this identity because they are originally from Italy. In the same way that Rudinow says that a person of non Afro-American origins does not have the experience to truly understand the blues, an individual of the dominant discourse does not have enough knowledge or education to understand the individual identity of the Italian Canadian, which leads to a superficial interest in the culture of the immigrant. Moreover, this superficial interest brings the disappearance of the individual authentic identity and gives way to the creation of a common identity that leads to the issue of stereotypes. One could point to Heritage days in Edmonton and analogous festivities across Canada as an example of the cultivation and exploitation of the different, of the ethnic.

The Constructed Common Identity

""Authenticity" is applicable to the artifacts and rituals which are a culture's "currency," conferring value on those "acceptably derived" from original sources" (Rudinow

129). At times depending on where the particular ethnic group finds itself on the hierarchy of power, authenticity can be seen as a potential threat to those of the dominant discourse. The problem with authenticity is that it is easily turned on itself and used in a way which is very superficial even if in fact it is part of the immigrant's individual identity. As Rudinow speaks of a type of "cultural currency", this authenticity even created the base for the discourse to create a common identity for an ethnic group. Jolanta Drzewiecka, author of "Discursive Construction of Differences Ethnic Immigrant Identities and Distinctions" discusses the idea of 'habitus' by Pierre Bourdieu. It states, "Habitus is developed and shared by those who occupy similar positions in the social field" (Drzewiecka 246). She continues her discourse discussing immigration:

> "Prior to immigration, people live within specific social locations and share habitus with others who occupy similar positions. Their habitus includes social principles, opinions and understanding of both their own location and their economic capital. All these elements are called into question when people cross national and cultural borders. The habitus they bring with them serves as a lens that allows them to make sense of their experiences and to position themselves in relation to others… Those who share the same ethnic label do not necessarily share the same cultural expressions or the same habitus" (Drzewiecka 249).

It is here where the generalization occurs and the dominant discourse puts all Italian immigrants in a particular group with the label of "Italian". It is true that there exists a similar experience between immigrants but like Drzewiecka the habitus that they bring with them gives them a position and the problem that subsequently occurs. It is when the experiences of the habitus become materialized and turned into a common identity that leads to a stereotype. It is here that the construction of the identity is no longer in the hands of the individual, but

changes hands to the dominant discourse that seeks a way to maintain their power over these groups. It is clear that this is the beginning of a struggle where the immigrant searches for any remnants of their old identity. Cheng States:

> "It is here, perhaps, that we may glimpse a hint of the cultural forces behind the continuing reification of authenticity and ethnic identitarianism in the world today… with distinct cultures gradually melding into a transnational global culture: rather than needing now to depend less on cultural differences and identities, previously distinct cultures suffer an anxiety about the perceived loss of identity and subjectivity, thus requiring the continuing construction and maintenance of fantasmatic identities and authenticities so as to continue to be able to assert difference and superiority…" (32)

This type of representation generalizes and puts all Italians in a category that characterizes them into certain stereotypes. The stereotype is very difficult to combat or counter because it uses aspects of the authenticity of the individual and it uses them to render the immigrant in an object. The function of this is to easily control them. Italian stereotypes are not always negative ones however despite this "positive stereotyping" this is still a considerable reduction, and this becomes the mask used to show a positive use of the stereotypes. In this case we have we have an interesting conflict. The Italian Canadian does not exist as an individual but at times the constructed identity gives them more opportunities to enter into the power game with those of the dominant discourse. This becomes very problematic because we see the culmination of the controlling process of the dominant discourse. Not only do they strive to control the immigrant in a masked manner but they create labels in which the immigrant only exists as an object that can easily be exploited.

Stereotypes

The polemics involved in the discussion regarding stereotypes becomes more confusing when the actual spreading of stereotypical representation comes from the ethnic groups themselves. What positive function could the stereotype serve if the groups themselves play into them? The Italian plays into the stereotype because it gives him/her a position and a role in the social discourse. For one who is considered subaltern and holds an inferior position in society based purely on their ethnicity, buying into stereotypes allows them to exist, even if it is a marginalized existence. As the immigrant is devalued in society, as a means of ameliorating their situation they tend to assume a constructed identity based on stereotypes. This gives them a label which allows them to fit into the surrounding social context. The expression *keep your friends close and your enemy's closer* describes this situation. Ethnic groups pose a potential threat to the dominant discourse in that their power and their way of life could change if customs and practices of these groups are adopted. By keeping them close by including them at least in a marginalized position, it is easier for the dominant discourse to control the group. Obviously by buying into the stereotype there is a renouncing of culture and individual identity by assimilating into the constructed identity or existing in a mocked form which poses no threat to the current social dynamics. While this process comes at the cost of integrity, one can understand the individuals for taking the opportunity to actually enter into the society that they left their homeland for. We must remember that for the immigrant, the major motive for leaving the homeland is to find prosperity and a better lifestyle that was not available to them due to financial hardships and the effects of two world wars. Therefore the quicker the individual is accepted into the new society, the greater the chances of obtaining their goal of success. Today what society reinforces is the idea of integration and becoming part of the masses through what is

ultimately a constructed identity. Through this strategy of using stereotypes it is much more efficient and covert than out right stereotyping, which would be criticized as racist. Its effectiveness makes it even more dangerous.

By establishing this discourse of the stereotype we could define a construction of a horizontal scale of stereotypes that function within the aforementioned hierarchy of power in society. This construction could be described as such: On each extreme there is a fountain of information from left to right. On the one hand exists the individual identity that contains authentic details and cultural information that comes with the individual when they emigrate. On the other, we have the stereotypes which include the general common identity of Italian immigrant. When the Italian leaves Italy they bring with them an identity and from the point of arrival that identity begins to change and travels across. Every immigrant is different and it is unsure how many will lose parts of their individual identity, but surely every immigrant experiences fluctuation of identity in their attempt to gain acceptance during their integration into the new society. If the immigrant reaches the extreme of the stereotype we could say that the dominant discourse has retained control and that the individual identity is replaced by the stereotype. It is problematic to make a statement saying that individual identity lost is replaced by a living a stereotype, because no individual would consider themselves a stereotype. The birth of a stereotype has to have a realistic basis. It is counterproductive to deny the existence of certain stereotypes because their roots are founded in authenticity. Stereotypes seem to be able to integrate or recuperate a superficial notion of authenticity, as in food, so as to offer it back as a consumable category, merchandise, goods, or commodities of the individual. As previously noted authenticity forms part of the construction of individual identity, prior to their emigrating in this case, the dominant discourse takes these authentic characteristics and exaggerates them to create the stereotype in order to identify the

immigrant and make them into a caricature easily denied power. One aspect that must be accepted is that there are certain traits and characteristics that are particular to each culture that contribute to its uniqueness. Not everyone is ruled by similar customs and the differences among people can be vast, and this poses the problem addressed by Drzewiecka about differing "habitus". As it is explained, what tends to occur is a process of generalization. As a result of one culture looking to assimilate individuals into a dominant group the differences between people are eliminated or at least that is the goal of assimilation. The dominant discourse looks to use authentic characteristics of one ethnic group against them in order to gain control over them. Therefore, stereotypes function as a tool of control for the dominant discourse. By controlling authentic aspects of an individual there is the controlling of the individual identity which is the essence of that individual – breaking the existential vision of that person. Now that the idea of the construction of identities has been established we must pose another question - where does the individual find themselves after the establishment of identities? With this question we must take into consideration the context in which we find ourselves: A Bicultural Society.

Where does the Italian Canadian fit in Biculturalism?

Having seen the construction of identity it is necessary to clarify that there exists individual responsibility for the fluidity of identity. We could say that this type of construction is present and occurs for every individual, but the individual also has the responsibility of watching the amount of fluctuating that occurs while traveling across these constructed representations. For example, an Italian Canadian who buys into the stereotype is destroying their indlvidual identity to conform to the dominant discourse, while the individual who finds the institution oppressive and does not conform comes to be seen as

subaltern. The position of the immigrant is always marginalized; they can exist either totally outside of the sphere of power as subaltern, or they can exist within the sphere with a marginalized position and a constructed identity. The term *subaltern* from studies by Antonio Gramsci, later used by Gayatri Spivak in the postcolonial discourse, is explained in the following manner:

> "SUBALTERN---Originally a term for subordinates in military hierarchies, the term subaltern is elaborated in the work of Antonio Gramsci to refer to groups who are outside the established structures of political representation. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Gayatri Spivak suggests that the subaltern is denied access to both mimetic and political forms of representation." [3]

In the article "The Cult of Ethnicity and the Fetish of Pluralism: A Counterhegemonic Critique" [4]The notion of marginalization is examined through an explanation by Katharine Newman a founding member of *MELUS*[5]:

> "…the ethnic or marginal person responds to the hegemonic culture in three ways: by opposing it, constructing a bridge to it, or enriching it. Admittedly hegemonic (since you are forced to relate to it), the dominant (Euro-American) culture is, however, presented as a neutral or indifferent body" (San Juan Jr 220).

Therefore the space that the immigrant occupies depends on the way they respond to the hegemonic culture. The space in which immigrants find themselves is more often than not an intermediary space. Fred Gardaphé states, "…I was convinced that the good immigrants were those who struggled to be American…At least, I thought, the good immigrant realized the need to disguise or better erase all traces of un-Americanness" (The Italians and the

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[3] . 17 Jan. 2008

[4] San Juan, Jr. E. "The Cult of Ethnicity and the Fetish of Pluralism: A Counterhegemonic Critique" Cultural Critique, No. 18. (Spring, 1991), pp.215-229.

[5] The Society for the Study of the Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States

'Mericans 69). This space where the immigrant looks to become part of American society and eliminate traces of ethnicity could be seen as an "in-between" space. Italians are described as "In-between Peoples"[6]. This space could be seen as the space of displacement, where there exists a constant struggle to become part of the community. In Canada it is difficult to define this community because there are two faces. One is the policy of Multiculturalism and the other is the reality of biculturalism – two dominant powers French and English. Respectively, the first is a result of the history of immigration that has been the growing force in Canada; as well as a tolerance displayed for cultures to maintain their individuality upon immigration in contrast to their American counterparts whom proudly show themselves as a melting pot. Somehow despite the constant advertising of multiculturalism, Canada still remains a bicultural society with the dominant classes coming from an ancestry of French or English roots, a founding fathers principle, including official bilingualism. In the book Selling Illusions: the Cult of Multiculturalism in Canada, the author Neil Bissoondath criticizes the institutionalized system of multiculturalism but his arguments contradict themselves. There are points where he criticizes the system for the superficiality of multiculturalism when he states, "The public face of Canadian multiculturalism is flashy and attractive; it emerges with verve gaiety from the bland stereotype of traditional Canada at "ethnic" festivals around the country" (82). This is one of the downfalls of Canadian multiculturalism, that it functions only at a superficial level reducing the ethnic groups into a spectacle. Instead of establishing an alternative or a solution to make multiculturalism work, Bissoondath proposes assimilation. He states, "The document is striking in its lack of any mention of unity or oneness of vision. Its provisions seem aimed instead at encouraging division, at ensuring that the various ethnic groups whose

[6] Robert Orsi, David Roediger and James Barrett use this term to characterize Italians and Rudolph J. Vecoli uses it in the essay "Italian Americans and Race: To Be or Not to Be White" page 96.

interests it espouses discover no compelling reason to blur the distinctions among them" (43). The fundamental problem that occurs with immigrants is the fact that there already exists a mentality of tunnel vision, and through politics the vision that we are given is that of the spectacle. He himself as an immigrant could be described as one who has embraced the constructed identity of the dominant discourse and as such he finds himself in the sphere of power playing the high stakes game of commercial publishing. He obtained the 'dream' with a one-dimensional vision. In a review of the book, journalist John Metcalf writes that this book "Is an extremely important book which should be read by everyone who cares about the future shape of this country." [7] He applauds Bissoondath's critique on multiculturalism and also supports the fact that when one arrives in Canada they should simply become "Canadian". Metcalf continues, "Bissoondath states that most immigrants want to join Canadian mainstream and become "Canadians" but that official multiculturalism encourages them instead to become "hyphenated Canadians" whose loyalties are split between Canada… and the country of their origin." One could agree with the idea that Canada as a multicultural space is a myth. Bissoondath continues in his text, "Canada has long prided itself on being a tolerant society, but tolerance is clearly insufficient in the building of a cohesive society. A far greater goal to strive for would be an accepting society" (Selling Illusions 192). We could add that an "accepting society" only exists if the immigrant is willing to take on the constructed identity that is created by those that define the "accepting society". Therefore the space that the individual occupies depends only on where they find themselves on the scale of the constructed identity. As previously stated, those that exist through a constructed identity always find themselves close to the sphere of power, and have more possibility of integrating and ultimately achieving success. This becomes problematic when discussing the

[7] Metcalf, John."Tolerance versus Acceptance" The Ottawa Citizen 16 October 1994: B2. 10 Jan 2008.

concept of self-representation. Italian Canadian writers and intellectuals find themselves constantly in a displaced location. Some write of their own experiences with a critical vision of the system, realizing that they exist in an alienated space as artists while others sell themselves to the system in order to achieve success. Italian Canadian writer and critic, Pasquale Verdicchio, discusses Neil Bissoondath and Italian Canadian writer Nino Ricci. Ricci has had much success with his literature including winning the Governor General's Prize for Fiction in 1990 for his book Lives of the Saints, which was later turned into a television film that was a joint project between the Italian and Canadian television companies. He is criticized for his depiction of Italian immigrants because he often plays with the stereotype in order to define Italian Canadians. Verdicchio says:

> "Writers such as Neil Bissoondath and Nino Ricci have achieved prominent positions within this context. I bring up their names only to emphasize that my denial of Italian nationalism does not correspond to Bissoondath's attack on ethnicity or Ricci's cynical abuse of Italian emigrant history in his recently complete novelistic trilogy. Their critiques remain superficial and self-serving devices that are only meant to raise them as individuals above what they appear to view as the dung-heap of immigrant and ethnic cultures"[8]

With the ideas of constructed identity for Italian Canadians established it is important to look at the self-representation by the writers themselves. How do these artists define their history and identity and how do their works reflect the struggle in finding the right identity to live by. The journey discussed in their works often portrays the hardship in travelling across multiple identities. The conflicts that occur as a result of having multiple identities are both external and internal. Individuals find themselves in the position of having to be someone different

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outside of the home and inside of the home. At what cost does this occur? What is lost and what is gained? These conflicts form part of the everyday life of the immigrant. What the artists capture through poetry, theatre and prose is a look at the conflict of the multiplicity of identities. The Italian Canadian artists attempt to relay the experience of emigration and the effects that may occur throughout this process. Often what is discovered is the existence of the conflict experienced by the artist because of their Italian Canadian status and how they struggle through the numerous identities that are constructed for them.

Chapter 2: Self Representation: Italian Canadian writers

To begin it is important to evaluate and look at how the creative voice portrays their identity to the outside. Obviously it would be naïve to think that by identifying a group of artists and taking their self-representation of what it means to be Italian Canadian it is the only measurement of what Italian Canadian identity is. What the artists do is give a voice of the group, minority literature is very similar in terms of literature that is written by the colonized group in postcolonial discourses in that the artistic production is often a representation of the greater whole. In fact the artist's self representation also gives us another view into the power relations that exist between the dominant discourse or culture and the minority. These artists embody a genre of literature that often has a very difficult time being placed into a category. Are Italian Canadian writers writing Canadian literature, Minority literature, Italian Canadian literature? By analyzing a very diverse group of Italian Canadian artists it may not be possible to arrive at a conclusive category, but we are able to identify the struggles that arise for these artists in having their voices heard and exposing the deeper facets of the Italian Canadian's identity and touching upon the difficulty in having that voice heard. What we are given is a very dynamic vision of what it means to be an Italian Canadian through poetry, short stories, theatre and fiction.

Poetry Selections

In examining the body of work from Italian Canadian writers, one can easily identify the common experience that is experienced by the immigrants that immigrated into Canada. The circumstances under which the individuals leave their country are always the same, the search for a better style of living. Through their writing, the thread that binds the immigrants' experience to a common experience is that of labor and displacement. While

each immigrant's experience is unique there is always the common thread of working long hours and hard labor jobs with the fact that they remain displaced from their new society. This common experience leads way to another commonality which is the establishment of 'little Italies'. In their understanding of each other's sacrifices and hardships, the immigration experience often leads to a union of minority groups in communities. While on the one hand this provides a support system for the minority group, it at the same time causes further displacement. These experiences are recounted in various forms of writing from poetry, to fiction to theatre. Another dynamic that enters into play is then the business of writing. If we have first generation or second generation Canadians, whom are Italian Canadians writing about the immigrant experience in Canada what is the reception that they receive and how do they affect the canon of Canadian literature. This issue ties directly into the experiences which are addressed in their work in that while they write about the hardship and displacement their predecessors felt in moving to Canada they too experience a form of displacement as a result of their identity. The following quoted poetry selections have been adapted from their original formatting in the original texts and appear here centered in format for the purpose of this analysis.

The poem "Mimosa" by Mary di Michele [9] examines the state of mind of an older Italian man who emigrated from Italy to Canada and after finding economic stability he still feels empty.

"Even more than a tired man, Vito is a sad man,
All Sunday afternoon finds him rocking
in the brighton rocker, in the backyard
of the house he's earned, under the sky he's created
Of green fiberglass, jutting from the roof.
There was only one heaven, the heaven of the home.

[9] Di Michele, Mary. "Mimosa" Mimosa and other poems. 1981. Mosaic Press/Valley Editions. Oakville Ontario:1-3.

There was only one paradise, the garden
That kept them little children even as adults,
Until one angel, Lucia, his luckless offspring
Fell, refusing to share in his light."

The allusion to his life as a hard laborer from the description of his tiredness allows the reader to realize that this man has worked his whole life yet still is unsatisfied and mired in sadness despite the fact that he has earned a home and his own private greenhouse which is a sign of his own self-sufficiency along with the traditional importance of homemade or homegrown. Di Michele shows the classic Italian quality of family and the importance of the home symbolizing his family as his heaven. Yet his sadness stems from his daughter Lucia leaving the home and in essence leaving part of her identity by placing herself before the family. Why the description of "luckless"? Perhaps it could be referring to her leaving the home unmarried to set out alone. The importance of family and also the traditions of daughters leaving their fathers for a husband could be an indication of his displeasure with his daughter, and more so the burning question in his mind of 'where did I go wrong when I did everything and moved to this country so they (the children/wife) may have a better future'. This in turn creates the eternal dilemma which often appears in the minds of immigrants of doubt and the question of "was it really worth it".

"Sentimental music is being sucked up
From the stereo system in the basement
Like a sweet gaseous pop
Through a straw.
He listens to an Italian tenor sing Mimosa
And savours his banishment
With a ginger nostalgia
Ginger ale fizzing in a glass by his side"

The ginger nostalgia like ginger root can be seen as something bittersweet. Ginger by nature can provoke a sweet and bitter aroma. Sweet in that his so called banishment has brought him

success by the sweat of his brow yet the nostalgia is bitter in that perhaps as a result he has sacrificed a part of himself in the process of becoming 'Canadian", which we can tie into the image of his sipping the very Canadian soft drink of Ginger Ale. Joseph Pivato addresses nostalgia by identifying songs as, "an important source of material for Italian-Canadian poetry" (Echo 84). For Pivato the presences of songs,

> "lament the exile of immigration, the separation from family, loved ones, and the hardships with a sentimentality that is hard for Canadians to understand. They are either suspicious or dismiss it as theatrical…Whether treated with irony, humour or disdain it is clear that these sentimental songs cannot be ignored by Italian-Canadian poets" (Echo 85-86).

"Summer's finished.
The few roses left are such a dark red
You imagine the odour of menstrual blood.
There's a walk of broken tiles through the well trimmed grass
Leading to a vegetable patch, fenced and carefully tended,
A nursery for deep purple eggplant, whose mature passions
Keep them close to the security of the ground,
Garlic, the most eloquent of the plants,
With the grace of a lily, from white clusters of buds,
The flower, is sticking out a long green tongue.
Zucchini, tomatoes, peppers, tender peas, and Italian
Parsley,
The season yields"

The imagery and senses are all evoked in this passage, the end of summer with the last roses that seem to be decaying and contrasted with the sense of menstrual blood which is the excretion of something not used and wasted in a sense. The broken tiles amongst perfection acting as the flaws in a seemingly controlled and perfect lawn just as the cracks of a family are trying to be hidden by perfection, and by the belief that they made it. The idea of being grounded not taking passage across bodies of water but rooted juxtaposing the act of leaving. "The season yields" productive garden and a plentiful harvest yet contrasted with the

previous image of waste. In this passage the writing and reference to gardening and typically Italian produce could be often mistaken for common use of stereotyping - the Italian with his 'orto' producing food. What is interesting about this passage is that Di Michele takes back what is often used as a stereotype and uses its images to demonstrate the contrasting emotions that affect the immigrant. She takes back the garden which has been used by the dominant discourse to stereotype Italians and gives it back to the immigrant to show his pain in displacement.

"He tries to improve the English he learned in classes
for new Canadians by reading the daily papers.
Unlike his wife, he can talk to his children in the language
In which they dream, but he keeps that tongue
In his pocket like a poorly cut key to a summer residence.
He keeps his love for them like old clothes, in a trunk,
He no longer wears in public. He never wanted the girls to grow up.
He wants Lucia to be three again and sleeping in his arms"

In this passage we can see the difference that exists between the husband and wife dynamic which is very prevalent in the Italian Canadian discourse. He is literate and can speak English while his wife is not. English is the language that will bring his children a good future and as such is the language in which they dream, but for him the language is like the dream of having enough to have a summer residence which he really cannot access. He cannot access these dreams for himself, but for the sake of his children he uses the language which will be the key to their success. His love for his children unfortunately is something that he must mask because in this society the way he knows to love them, a more traditional patriarchal and confining manner is not status quo and again he is reminded of his child who has left him and taken the "enemy's" value system.

"A small shack stands in the northwest corner of the garden,
His latest project, a hut for storing seeds and tools,
And now there's nothing left to build,
A lifetime of development, of homes under construction, there's nothing left to be done,
The man's hands are idle and have found time to brood"

Vito's lifelong commitment to working hard in Canada has now shown him that while dedicating all his efforts and time to working what he missed out on was his family. The internal conflict for this man is that his actions, the years of hard work and neglect, were all done in the name of his family, their stability and economic security. The important point to note is the economic part of the problem. The main reason that any Italian or in many cases why people immigrate to another country is to obtain economic benefits which were not possible to them in their homelands. The problem now for Vito is that he is acknowledging his inability to be a part of his family in order to give to them the economic. For a group which defines itself most often by the importance of family, this becomes a great conflict for him. If we go into the mind of this character perhaps the poet is criticizing the lure of the economic benefits for which he came and most immigrants came because he somewhere had to give up part of himself for the economic dream to come true and have changed his identity and that of his family.

"The years spent working in a stone quarry just outside
Toronto
Taught him how to find the fault in rock
How to split it so that it could be used to build a face of pink and white limestone for an old house
Of red tar and plaster.
It didn't tell him much about the fault lines in his life:
The overtime the extra Saturdays, the few hours left frittered away asleep in front of the television,
Accounted for a distance he didn't bargain for,
The estrangement like a border crossing
Between himself and his children.
His good wife, he didn't have to think about,
She worked hard and cooked well.
He might have done other things,
But he married young, just after the war,
And hard times made him stop breathing for himself
And spend it all on his children."

The imagery of the rock work and a man who saw "the fault in the rock" but could not see it in his own life. "The estrangement like a border crossing" he left behind his family in pursuit of the Canadian dream. The woman knows her role and often the wife of an Italian man whom came and brought her after either with or before they had children knew her place. She would be the home and she would be required to rear the children while the husband worked and like Vito became a stranger to his family despite the fact that his actions are always done for the family.

"He has no son but his daughters are rare and intelligent
and full of music.
He's not happy, he knows he's getting old
and Lucia abandoned him to live in an apartment on her
own.
He has little hope of finding his youth in grandchildren
soon enough. He can be happy when he knows
that he'll die sooner than he cares to?
He still remembers his own father,
the left half of his body paralyzed
from a heart attack and how he died saying:
"I'll only have to close on eye when I die,
poor you, who'll have to close two."
After that Vito learned to sleep with his eyes open"

Vito has no sons, again which in any man brings on a sense of mortality, perhaps the end of the family name and no one to carry his legacy. The daughter is given away eventually to her husband and she will one day cease to be his. Also a lack of sons and only daughters provokes a sense of mortality for he will not live on in his son. The daughters' role is very fixed in the family she does not leave her home as aforementioned unless it is on the arm of her husband who assumes the caregiver role to her. Yet "Lucia abandoned him to live in an apartment on her own" and now he is surrounded by thoughts of his own mortality recalling his own father's death.

"He can remember the choice he had to make
as a poor one: to starve making fireworks
to celebrate the saints' days, in the family trade,

working as he had worked as a child,
bare foot until he was thirteen, with his father,
and always hungry,
or to make his way in a new without mimosa,
where he didn't have to tip his hat to Don So-and-So in order to eat or get a job,
where he hoped a man would be judged by his work
and paid for his labour.
The good life gave him a house and money
in the bank and a retirement plan,
but it didn't give him fruitful daughters,
his favorite makes her scarce and the other looks like her mother."

The American moon is to reach a dream and to the Italian immigrant "il sogno americano" was the goal which also was the "il sogno canadese". We can see the selfishness which Vito looks at his life. His daughters both unmarried and childless have not given him some sense of immortality with grandchildren, even though they would mean more immortality for their father than the mother's family, which would include the grandfather Vito. His eldest refuses to fall into the trap of eternal gratitude and obligation and his second is so insignificant in that she is unlike him therefore does not reflect him.

The continuation of the poem looks at the respective points of views of Marta's Monologue and Lucia's Monologue, Vito's two daughters. The juxtaposing views of the daughters are poignant in their description of the second generation Italian Canadian, and their own struggle to integrate. Bound to family and traditional values which their parent's search to keep intact but at the same time trying to take advantage of the country that is meant to bring freedom. It is a confusing situation in that the parents come to this country to give their children the best future, yet when they come the expectation is to maintain the patriarchal traditions and way of life that they are accustomed to from the old country. In the case of Vito we see his regret almost as if his own success has betrayed him in the most personal way, on his family. Marta describes herself in a bitter manner, the daughter that follows her father's wishes and does not explore the freedom that this country has to offer in

order to appease and show her gratitude for the sacrifice that he made. Her bitterness extends to her sister whom has taken the liberty to explore her intelligence her artistic self which in her father's mind is contradictory to the ideals of hard work. Lucia's monologue contradicts her sister's in her freedom to explore this almost forbidden new culture, but is in conflict with her realization that she is much like her father in the end. These generational differences are discussed by Marino Tuzi as something that is continuously seen in Italian Canadian writing. He states, "Since ethnicity is motivated by social and economic factors, the identity of the minority person is not homogenous or singular… similar conditions will affect individual members of an ethnic group, such as parents and relatives, in different ways" (Writing the Minority Subject 9). Tuzi also notes an observation by Frank G. Paci, another Italian Canadian writer who notes the reaction of second generation Italian Canadians as reacting to "pressures of assimilation by absorbing the dominant language and world view" (Writing the Minority Subject 9). He continues by saying,

> "The social and institutional environment of children - primarily in terms of the school system, the media, and the impinging English Canadian mainstream culture – helped to form their view of the world. This view was frequently in conflict with the traditional values of their parents. At the same time, the children continued to retain components of their immigrant culture in their family and community life. Inevitably, these components began to intersect with aspects of their Canadian identity" (Tuzi 12-13).

In the poem Lucia and Marta each reacts differently to the generational gap between themselves and their father. Lucia obviously embraces the dominant culture but suffers the cost of losing her relationship with her father. Marta maintains strong to her traditional ties and is still unsatisfied. Who is really the winner in this poem? No one is the winner for all

three characters are unhappy because they each are conflicted with their identity and the people they have become as a result of emigration. The generational differences are noticed as well in the poetry of Antonino Mazza.

Roman Candles : An Anthology of Poems by Seventeen Italo-Canadian Poets (1978), was published to put on display the poetic abilities of Italian Canadian poets and writers. The collection of poetry includes, Antonino Mazza's poem "Canadese" which is directed to a son/daughter of an immigrant who has come to Canada at a young age. The title, "Canadese", the Italian translation of Canadian immediately refers to a new identity, no longer 'italiano' but 'canadese'.

"Because life for him
has been labour and struggle
Canadese, remember your father.
Don't try to reject your mother tongue,"

The young immigrant being already more a part of Canadian society is already detaching himself from the familial roots, but the roots of his father and his native language are a part of another identity, the upbringing experienced by the young immigrant is heavily influenced by the father's lifestyle and way of supporting his family. Perhaps by seeing the struggle experienced by the father has a cause and effect reaction by which the young immigrant sees the difficulty in being ethnic starting by having a language barrier. By being Canadian and a successful Canadian it is necessary to put the native language in second place so they have opportunities to avoid a lifestyle of labour and struggle.

"Be patient, don't rage,
Canadese, in time we'll belong
We'll acquire our own sense of this land;
We'll record life and death of our million births;
We'll have families,
Above and below the earth."

The obvious frustrations that come with integrating and realizing that you will never quite fit in and always be "Canadese" not Canadian, the importance of the Italian use of the word is to emphasize the inability to escape the multiciplicity of the identities, they will never be Canadian. The idea of belonging through building ancestry having families born Canadian and also the idea of being entered in the earth actually forming part of the physical Canadian landscape creates a stronger tie with the land.

"Canadese, you must never forget
What you are…never!
Because when you do, they'll remind you."

The discourse returns to the emphatic idea that despite having ties to the land and building an ancestry, the ethnic label and one's ethnicity cannot be erased. It is interesting to see how Mazza at first encourages the idea of not forgetting and having one remember for themselves who they are, and coming full circle showing how if one does attempt to forget who they are, the mainstream will constantly remind you that you are different. It is as if he is saying that it is better to not attempt to be something you are not, a Canadian, but accept and attempt to manage the dual identities, in this case Canadese and Canadian, because it is better to have one's own knowledge of who they are than having someone tell you who you are. Gender also becomes topic of discussion in various works. Being from the Italian side, we have a very patriarchal and traditional system which defines female roles as being secondary to that of the man. A woman goes from the control of her father to the control of her husband. The role of the father and daughter has already been seen in "Mimosa" by Mary di Michele, but the role of the female, be it mother, daughter or wife is also examined further by Gianna Patriarca and Mary Melfi.

Through poetry Gianna Patriarca captures the identity and struggles of the role of the Italian woman. Italian Women and Other Tragedies (1994) is a book of poetry dedicated to female Italian immigrants. In the poem entitled "Returning" she looks at the long term goal of the immigrant of the return to the homeland. The concept of 'returning' comes from the nostalgia felt everyday for home; it turns into "the other dream" which she describes as having "lost its nationality". The play on the expression "American dream" or "Canadian dream" shows the ambiguous situation which presents itself to immigrant when contemplating the return. They no longer are one nationality but none. The use of image evoking terms like her description of the hundreds of emigrants disembarking the ships at Halifax as "finally vomited on the shores of Halifax" gives the image of these "swarms" of people falling into Canada in a sudden and rapid act as if being dropped onto a country with nothing. She comes with her mother and sister who is "crying for bread and mortadella". While this can be superficially looked as an expression of 'Italianness" to look for food and familiar deli meat, the key is in the 'familiarity'. The cry is for something that is known and familiar to her sister. Something which is now mocked in reenactments of immigrants arriving at Pier 21, the cry is for something that is familiar to the child which in this case happens to be food. The meeting with the father/husband is a meeting with a dream that is not the woman's. Dutifully she is required to follow her husband, and in this dynamic the husband /wife dynamic shows the power of the man over the woman and the father over the daughter. He is described as "a half forgotten man" which for the Italian woman meant becoming a dutiful wife to practically a stranger because what awaited the female when she arrived was a psychologically different man who has been changed by emigration and is now shifting across the plane of multiple identities. Returning home brings a new dynamic into

play. As she states, "Not American Not Canadian or Italian" the return becomes more difficulty because the identities of those individuals hoping to return are ambiguous and fluid.

The final selection of poetry entitled "The Alien" by well known Italian Canadian poet and writer Mary Melfi originally from her book of poetry The O Canada Poems (1986) and republished in Stages: Selected Poems (1998) shows how Melfi explores the immigration experience through the voice of Maria. The recurrent theme is the idea of identity and the loss of identity through immigration as well as the alienation experienced by immigrants.

"Maria promises herself
When she returns home from her (world) trip
She will write a short play on the theme:

Immigration is like an alien with two heads.
Only in a comedy is the alien a good egg."

The experience of immigration is as if going on vacation because one never feels part of the society so in essence it becomes a trip around the world encountering different cultures, but never actually finding a place. The simile of immigration being like an alien with two heads plays with the idea that as an immigrant you are perceived as being so different that not only are you 'alien' as a stranger, but the two heads implies a physical difference which stands out and makes one even more repulsive, monstrous. The idea of a 'good egg' implies various interpretations. For example, the context of a comedy indicates that only as a joke or something to be mocked is the context in which the alien is seen as something positive out of a group. The idea of 'egg' also plays with the connotations of 'seed' and fertility in that it is a viable reproduction, therefore still playing with the context that only as a joke can the alien be considered something that is viable or productive. Melfi as a poet and writer explores often with a sarcastic view the idea of identity and specific roles that are designated by our identity. For example, in her novel Infertility Rites she explores the journey of an Italian Canadian woman who has lived her life battling her Italian identity

which has designated certain gender roles upon her as a woman. Never wanting children, she reaches a point in her life where she becomes obsessed with the idea of conceiving. The manner in which Melfi writes the protagonist and the resentment she feels towards her identity of an Italian woman and this almost predisposed desire as both woman and more importantly Italian woman to procreate. The struggle with the identity is even more difficult as she struggles to conceive and she blames the Italian identity focused on family as catching up with her and as something which she has constantly struggled to escape which catches up with her. Pasquale Verdicchio discuses Melfi's approach to dealing with ethnicity through her protagonist Nina,

> "Melfi's formula goes beyond the politics of reproduction and includes issues of ethnic and minority identity, as well as cultural critique, and self-reflective passage. Throughout the novel, she equates blackness with fertility and the assimilated (or non-black) with infertility. Whiteness and infertility correspond to success" (Tracing the Ground of Identity 55).

These common themes seen in poetry such as the family, gender roles, generational gaps are also captured eloquently in short stories. The following short stories by C. Dino Minni and Caterina Edwards touch upon all of these issues of Italian Canadian identity through brief yet poignant prose.

Short Stories

The short story "Details from the Canadian Mosaic" by Italian Canadian writer C. Dino Minni is one of the pieces compiled in The Anthology of Italian-Canadian Writing by the aforementioned well known Italian Canadian studies critic, Joseph Pivato. Minni writes the story of Mario and his journey to the prairies as a child immigrating to Canada. "Hey no

one knows how to talk in this place!" He looked so funny standing there that they could not help but laugh – at his turned-up nose, at his child's logic at their own strangeness" (56). The innocence of being a child, the protagonist Mario's brother seeing the Canadians as being strange yet the contrast of the older child noticing that in fact they were the strange ones. In this short story we see how the young immigrant child changes, as indicated by his inward look at their strangeness. "...He had also made other discoveries…though he was changing, his parents remained foreign…His mother especially needed protection. He became her companion and interpreter – at the store, the post office, the bank, even the church." (58-59). The role of the child in terms of their connecting their parents to the land is by their first hand experiences of growing up with the language and customs of Canada and not Italy. We have seen that often this seems threatening to the parents in that they feel they are losing their children, but by losing them they are also more tied to Canada. The Italian side of the child's identity is slowly pushed aside by the Canadian identity. In this short story we see the common practice of adopting an anglicized name. Mario becomes Mike as he grows, "He did not know at what point he had become Mike. One day looking for a suitable translation of his name and finding none, he decided that Mike was closest…he was Mario at home and Mike in the streets" (59). We can see with this that the private space is conducive to ethnicity and the space where he can be Mario the Italian; the public space is more conducive to Mike the Canadian. It is interesting because it shows that really there is no space for the Italian Canadian. Mario has to make a choice, and obviously in the streets it is more to his advantage to be Mike. At the end of the short story when Mario is older, he finds himself at a fair for Italian Canadians. The stereotypical and political spectacle of the fair shows how as a display of culture the dancing and the proclamations are not representative of the immigrant's identity – for those present the spectacle is more of an exhibition for non

Italians to get a generalized constructed view of Italian identity. For Mario and for the actual Italian immigrant, the folk music and spectacle evokes memory as nostalgia of a previous identity that is beyond the spectacle. Where the dominant discourse in attendance remains at the surface reading , the immigrant is transported back to a pre-emigration state, in this case back to an old identity, back to Mario and away from Mike.

The novelist and playwright Caterina Edwards has made a name for herself in the Italian Canadian writing scene through her works The Lion's Mouth (1982) and her play Homeground *(Terra Straniera)* (1990) in addition to numerous short stories, novellas and essays. A common thread in her work is the theme of identity, and the two works which most reflect this theme are The Lion's Mouth and Homeground. Her work is highly personal in that she uses much of her own past and history. "Edwards' fascination with this question has its roots in her own life experiences as an immigrant girl, as the daughter of an Italian mother and English father, as a person born in England but raised in Alberta" (Pivato, "Marriage of Life and Art" 7) Summers spent in Venice also gave her a connection and tie to her own Italian identity. This personal connection to the body of literature is a common threat that exists in most immigrant writers which enhances the genuine quality of the product. In the play Homeground we have two main characters that are the central force that ties the fiction together. Cesare is an Italian who immigrated to Canada with a group of men from the same general area in Italy (The Veneto). The men all live in the same home and are taken care of by Cesare's wife, Maria. Appearing in Ricordi, Things Remembered: An Anthology of Short Stories edited and compiled by the aforementioned C.D. Minni, Caterina Edwards contributes a short story entitled "Prima Vera" This short story serves as the backdrop and basis for the play Homeground. Combined into one 'Primavera' is the Italian word for spring. Separated we have a much different meaning, Prima meaning first, and Vera

meaning "true". The title implies a coming of the first truths. In the short story we see how Cesare chooses his wife Maria and how she as the dutiful wife returns to Canada as a newlywed to start her life with her husband. The courtship of Maria and Cesare is hardly one of young love, instead Cesare returns to Italy from Canada to find a wife. The illusive Maria convinces herself with the encouragement of her father that she will get to know her husband and that as a dutiful female she must always submit to the will of the ruling male figure in her life; be it her father whom encourages her to leave to her husband Cesare whom takes her to this strange land. When Cesare meets Maria in Italy he is back in his patria for a simple purpose, to take a wife. He states, "I've come back to Italy to find a wife" (131). He explains to his roommates one dinner, "I was desperate. I had so little time left…I had to have a wife. I couldn't return without one. I would have taken anyone. Even a whore if she was willing" (131). For many women at the time this meant the opportunity of a lifetime, not only would they find a husband, but they would leave Italy for better prospects. Maria shows her doubts in marrying a stranger and finds the realities that came with living in a foreign country. She became the care giver to five men not just Cesare. The goal was always to return back to Italy once they achieved the economic success they searched. "Surrounded as we are by strangers – just to come home and hear the sound of our dialect…It makes me feel not so far from home…And they do pay me well…We can get back home faster." Maria relies on the idea that this is temporary and that they will return home, the boys and the familiarity of language and customs helped the feeling of alienation felt upon leaving the house. One of the characters Lucio was educated and seems more enlightened than the others, we see his education by the fact that he speaks to Maria in Italian and not dialect (135). The main goal of men in this time was to find a wife and as such letters between potential spouses travelled between Italy and Canada. The reality of the cold and foreign

land and alienation which Maria is experiencing is unknown to the women who dream of coming to Canada. What is noticeable in this piece is the self reflection and the role of the female. Maria is not a peasant and is not coming to Canada because of a hardship. The group together finds refuge in each other and those with the same immigration story. What often is judged as being antisocial is simply a survival mechanism. When Maria goes to give birth to her baby we can see what happens when she leaves the familiar zone of their ethnic area. Her total displacement is seen first when she is alone with Cesare as he attempts to comfort her on their way to the hospital and the displacement with the doctors and nurses. They are cold and treat her like an animal; they are disgusted by her ethnicity and her crying to her mother. "Sshhush," said the blond nurse, her freckled face scrunched in disgust. "Italians!" (140). The doctor mocks her for her size indicating that it is due to her consumption of too much spaghetti (140). When the child is born Maria finally has a connection to Canada, "…her boy grounded her… though she was not to know it for many years, his pudgy body was her first connection to the hard, foreign land. She was saved and she was bound" (141). The child despite being of Italian origin is Canadian and as such will grow up in Canadian society. His bond to Italy is more superficial because his lived experiences will be in Canada. This poses difficulties when the idea of return comes into play. The child will experience alienation in going to Italy because it is not part of his history, but his ethnicity will also mark his identity in Canada. The parents can no longer simply detach themselves from Canada because the child binds them to the land. Through theatre Edwards continues the story of Maria and Cesare, and shows the progression of the effects of identity shift. Homeground along with plays by Quebec playwright Marco Micone and Vittorio Rossi look at identity not only through words, but also through a visual product.

Theatre

In the play Homeground we see the continuation of Cesare and Maria's story. First it is interesting to note the difference from the English title to the Italian title. Homeground implies a more positive connotation. The idea of 'home' is one of family and obviously 'ground' meaning that Cesare and Mara have made the Canadian land their home. Terra Straniera is a more negative connotation. 'Strange land' would be the literal translation indicating less of a home like situation but still looking at the foreignness of the land. Pivato discusses the controversy over the title of the play prior to its release,

> "The Italian title of the play was questioned. Do we keep the original Italian title, a reference from an old immigrant folk song, or do we use a more accessible English title? When it went to press the play's title was changed from *Terra Straniera* (Strange land) to a term which had the opposite meaning, *Homeground*. The meanings are in keeping with the different perspectives from the two languages. For an Italian immigrant Canada is a strange land; but for an English-speaking resident it can be home. This is an example when direct translation would not have brought out these different points of view" (Marriage of Life and Art 15-16).

One thing to go back to is the question of which land is being talked about – Italy or Canada. In the play Cesare and Maria are seeing the fruits of their sacrifices; they have saved and are dreaming of returning to Italy. The nostalgia felt by all is immense and the desire to return home to Italy is strong. Cesare Pitto states,

> "As far as Italian-Canadians are concerned, taking such a position would entail the relinquishing of the stereotype of "feeling at home," of ethnic memory, of nostalgia in order to bring all of these elements (and others) to bear on the mechanisms

whereby personal identity is formed, an identity which becomes cultural identity to the extent that it is able to communicate experience" (Remembering the Voyage 127).

The character who has finally succumbed under the pressures of living alone in Canada is Lucio. Lucio is unemployed and reflecting on the emigration. "A new life. I thought it was possible… I thought" (Homeground 14-15). Lucio was the educated one of the group, he states, "There are no jobs, no decent jobs. I was not brought up for brute labour. I am tired of it, tired of being reduced to a beast of burden. No more." (Homeground 16). The pressures of integration and the frustration of economic failure have taken its toll on him. His intellect can also be blamed for his state, for he can see and understand what the emigration process has done to him. He could easily at this point find any labor job and continue on like the others, but Lucio sees the process of exploitation at hand and as such can take no more. In his delusional state he has confined himself to his room. His desperation comes from the suffocating nostalgia felt for the homeland yet his intelligence makes him conscience of the reality that he is now also displaced from Italy. The reality of the situation was that many had left behind partners whom they promised either a return to Italy or the opportunity to have them emigrate. The letters from home were a constant reminder of the goals of emigration and reminders to not financially forget the ones they left behind. Lucio condemns these letters in his realization of the situation:

> "Your mother, your family, all our families, even our damned homeland, chose us as sacrifices to their contentment, their well-being. Need money? Ship off a son. A mistake? Ship off a daughter…We work and work. Machines…To send back dollars. And their letters – oh, they say they love us, but the dollars are what they really love. "Still, no work?" "We are sad to hear." Sad, sure, because the money flow has been

> cut. "Sad, sorry, sympathetic…blah, blah" The words are nothing. Formulas. They do not know what it is to live here" (Homeground 38-39)

We see that the individual feels betrayal not only from the country that was supposed to bring him riches but betrayal from his own homeland. He has no safe haven from where he can identify himself. The realities of emigration are ignored by those back home and the only knowledge they have of those who experience the success story. It is the illusion of the gold mine that drives the encouraging of emigration. Lucio also looks at the reality of the journey back, and the goal shared by many of one day returning.

> "The future. What future? You think we will be able to go back and take up where we left off. Haa…! Did anyone from your village ever emigrate and then return?...Sure many left, but only a few made it back. And in what state?...Happy? Healthy? The same as they left? Or were they bent and twisted from work and struggle?... One of my neighbours went to New York so his brothers could be educated, so his sisters could marry well. When he returned, he was too ignorant…to vulgar for those he had raised up with his own sweat…We have lost. No place there. And, damnit, no place here."(Homeground 39-40)

Reintegration into Italian society seems almost as impossible as integration into Canadian society. Again this can be correlated with the idea of history and culture lived and missed as expressed by Anselmi and Gouliamous. They have lost part of Italian culture and history by living in Canada which displaces them when they return, just as they are displaced by the missed history and experiences of Canada prior to their emigration, as such creating a situation of displaced as described by Lucio, "No place there…no place here."

This isolation leads to Lucio's madness and a threat of suicide which leads Maria and Cesare to have him committed to an institution and then sent to Italy to be in the care of his brother and sisters. Maria and Cesare finally had the opportunity to return back to Italy:

> Maria: "Three years later, it was our turn to go home."
>
> Cesare: "We stayed a year"
>
> Maria: "It didn't work: for the children who saw Canada as home or for Cesare who had changed. Lucio was right. We no longer fit our place."

Edwards' takes the reader back to the scene in "Prima Vera" when Maria gives birth to her son, and the realization and that they were "bound" to Canada. The history and experiences of the children were also theirs and created and undeniable tie to Canada because that was their (the children's) reality, and as well the history and experiences lived by themselves also changed them from being 'Italian'. Lucio commits suicide in Italy despite Maria and Cesare's efforts to keep him alive. His alienation from either Italian or Canadian society makes him unimportant to even his own family and causes his demise.

The problem that occurs with ethnic writers is how they depict people of their ethnic group. Joseph Pivato states, "Italian Canadian writers do not produce much experimental writing. Instead they tend to write very much in the realist tradition" (*The Singing Never Stops: Languages of Italian Canadian Writers* 54). Some Italian Canadian writers face a reality that transcends an English/French vision. Many writers including Marco Micone finds themselves in that space. Pasquale Verdicchio comments in Devils in Paradise:

> "Italian Canadians are suspended between the English/French Canadian reality and their own cultural background, the result of which one could imagine as a

> center/margin relationship in which, every day, every single act and though enacts a continual switching of positions from the center to the margins, and back again. There is a play of multiple personalities and unstable positions where the languages of thought and expression do not necessarily match, where the political opposition to a dominant culture often manifests itself as an internal rather than an external, experience" (15).

As a Quebecois and Italian Canadian writer, Marco Micone finds himself in a fluid space where he plays with the relations of power and language. Language is extremely important because language can be considered an authentic characteristic of the individual. Therefore, representing characters with the Italian language shows a connection to a more pre-emigration identity. French and English fight amongst themselves for a position in terms of the language of prestige. In this case, Marco Micone tries to make a commentary on Canadian society and the identity of the immigrant. This self representation works to create a vision and an identity of what it is to live in a Canadian society and how representation and stereotypes can be reinforced by those who search to break them. Marco Micone as an artist writes in both official languages English and French yet does so through the eyes of an Italian Canadian. This ambiguity is reflected in his theatrical piece, "Addolorata". We see how he destroys the myth of the "Canadian dream". The principal characters are presented as doubles of themselves at different moments of their lives. "Lola" is the nickname of "Addolorata" an Italian Canadian whose dream is to marry her boyfriend "Johnny"/"Giovanni" and to lives their lives differently than the existence that their parents as immigrants have. "Lola" and "Johnny" are the younger pre-marriage version of the characters, while "Addolorata" and "Giovanni", their given names are their names after years of marriage. The structure in the play is such that it creates a contrast between the younger

and older versions of the characters in order to emphasize the changes that occur in both. There are many scenes in which Lola is full of hope for a future that she desires to be different from that which she lives with her parents. The parents are characterized as the typical immigrants who work in factories and construction to better their economic situations. Johnny/Giovanni from the beginning exhibits a sentiment of resistance to the conformity that the system offers the immigrant. Lola who has some education knows how to speak four languages – English, Spanish, French and Italian. For her this signifies a manner of being multiple and the opportunity to change identities. She says:

> "I can also speak English with my friends, French with the neighbours, Italian with the machos and Spanish with certain customers…But the one I prefer is Spanish. I don't know what I would give to be a real Spanish lady. At the Bay, when I have Spanish customers, I introduce myself as Lolita Gomez" (137).

This ability to change identities is very important for the character of Lola. She continuously goes back to the idea of being different from her parents, but she also wants to live in the image that society tells her she wants and wants to be like. In the end she desires a sense of security without being silenced. What is meant by this is the silence brought by her gender role. As a female she is expected to go from the control of her father to the control of her husband. In this case we see how Lola is silenced by her father and also by Giovanni which in the ends makes her language abilities useless. If silenced by those closest to her than she too is silenced by society. Even if Lola has certain level of education it is noteworthy to see the battle that an immigrant has in terms of being free in a society and also the awareness of their own role. She as an Italian woman wants to escape the suffocating situation she lives in with her father, and she believes that Johnny (having living the same suffocating lifestyle in

his own home) will be more "Canadian" and less "Italian". Lola is very contradictory in that while she denounces the very traditional Italian familial roles imposed by her parents in lieu of a more free and "Canadian" style relationship with Giovanni, she criticizes the other women in her family that look to change their identities entirely. For example, she has a cousin in Toronto that is named as she is Addolorata, but she uses the name Laurie and studies to become a lawyer. Lola is an excellent example of the fluidity and confusion that occurs in terms of identity. She wants to be four different people in reflection of her four different means of communication. Pivato states, "For Addolorata there is not confusion between one language and another there is rather confusion over her own identity. She has apparently compartmentalized herself into four linguistic identities …is it rather simply a reality, a condition commonly found among ethnic minority characters?" (Echo 55). Language also becomes an important factor in the play, Pivato comments by saying, "In Quebec Marco Micone's plays, Addolorata and Gens du Silence, explore the loss of language and the suppression of the story of the immigrant… While speaking for the disenfranchised Micone's plays show both the complicity and criticism of the immigrant culture of voicelessness" (Echo 99-100). The multiplicity of language present in the play reflects a personal struggle that Micone experiences in his work. In the case of Addolorata despite having the tools of language she is in fact silenced and language as form of identity is also changed as a result.

Johnny is a very different character than Lola in that he becomes consumed by the injustices by the system and the role that the immigrant places in society. When he is young he shares some of the hope that Lola has, but never to the same degree. He does not want to live the classic immigrant lifestyle, which as defined in the play by Micone is working in construction or a factory, saving the most money possible to then buy a house in a nice

neighborhood with other immigrants that "made it". He has an intense hatred for this system that has already defined him as an Italian man. Therefore to break with this he opens a pool hall and lives in an apartment over his own business. The character in itself is a person that the system has tainted and destroyed, but his own resistance to the system is not a useful one. His own resistance has created a situation of total alienation from society and from his family. We could call this situation 'total displacement' in essence he becomes the person he is trying to escape. He become Addolorata's father and silences her and condemns her to live a worse version of the life that she had with her parents. He has put in his mind the idea that Addolorata only wants to live the life that everyone else has, he in his state of displacement, does not understand that he had the power to change that for her. It is a type, *this is who you think I am... fine that's exactly who I am.* Even if he does not work in a factory he in essence represents the extreme of the immigrant that only feels sorry for them and does nothing. The demoralized state of Giovanni has destroyed his family and all the hopes that Lola had. It appears that Micone is trying to show the destructive effects and futility that the immigrant faces if they do not conform to the rules of the system. In the end Addolorata leaves Giovanni because she can no longer go on and in his hypocrisy he tells her he cannot live without her. The changes in names Lola to Addolorata and Johnny to Giovanni shows the destruction caused by the system which in the end succeeds in displacing not only Giovanni but also Addolorata. Antonio D'Alfonso states, "What is important about a Micone play is how it is a play on itself. His plays *are* plays and do not pretend to be plays… Micone is a true essential writer…*Gens du silence (Voiceless People)* and *Addolorata* are stories about Italians, Italians looking at Italians…" (The Road Between Existentialism 222). In this piece, we see the effects of the constructed identity and its potential to destroy the individual.

At the same time another Italian Canadian playwright Vittorio Rossi presents a different type of work in the play "Little Blood Brother" where he plays with irony in order to make a commentary on the identity of the Italian man. The play revolves around three characters of Italian origin; Danny/Deuce, Rocco and Frank are part of a fraternal type group. Danny/Deuce is not full Italian but Irish and Italian. This young man illustrates a double identity, and is a type of "hybrid". As a character he is constantly battling between the various identities that form him. On one side he has his Italian identity which makes him close to the other boys, and gives him a certain position in the group. In this case we see how the stereotype of the macho Italian makes him part of this community. We see how the stereotype works in a positive manner for "Deuce". As previously stated, the stereotype in certain situations creates an identity for an individual. Danny, is both Italian and Irish, but his Irish ethnicity does not help in to fit into the group and is a characteristic which makes him always marginalized. Even if he characterizes himself as "typical" Italian which in this case would be through a stereotype he will never be fully accepted. At the same time he is also a Canadian. Rossi uses Canadian identity as a link between the characters and the plot of this play though hockey[10]. The space which hockey occupies makes the spectator see that Danny also has a very Canadian identity as he is one of the best players. Danny finds himself divided amongst many identities which creates an internal conflict. In one particular scene where a homosexual teammate touches Danny in the space of the "locker room" we see the dynamics of identities at work. First the actual physical space is important because a locker room is a space of fraternity and of ultra masculinity. We could say that the space is designated to create an environment of confidence between teammates on a team. It does not

[10] For more insight as to the importance of hockey in Canadian Identity, The 2006 film "Bon Cop, Bad Cop" (Alliance Atlantis Vivafilm) is a comic look at the politics of bilingualism and biculturalism through two police officers who find themselves solving a case which intertwines with the National Hockey League and shows hockey as a unifying tie between Anglo and French Canadians.

matter what culture we are talking about, the locker room as a space transcends cultures and functions as similar space for sport. In addition, hockey has always been seen as an extremely masculine sport where one must be strong of mind and body to play it and be successful. The problem that occurs is when the character Rick invades and violates the space with an anti-macho act. The machismo in the play is stereotypical in the depiction of Italians as being ultra macho. The Italian man is central in this work; he uses this characterization to make commentary against those of the dominant discourse. For example when Frank and Rocco discuss their encounter with a woman at the bar they say, "She goes because I'm Calabrese because of the heat and climate of southern Italy it would make us more...what did she say? (Frank)…More susceptible I think to bad temperaments" (28). Frank responds by saying, "I mean let's not generalize here. You want to talk about Italians know what the fuck you're talking about. That's like saying all English people are light skinned" (29). The critique does take a step back when Rocco responds to the skin color comment with, "But they are." Frank continues "Yeah, they do have a pale look" (29). In this writing the critique on constructed identity is not as clear as in the play by Micone. We could say that Rossi uses a sort of irony in his writing to make his critique of the representation of the Italian man. In the article, "Irony and Ethnography: On Cultural Analysis of One's Own Culture" Phyllis Pease Chock says, "[The ironists] What they have in common is a habit of using irony to confront contradictions, doubts, and uncertainties…The ironists used irony in part because they thought that I shared sufficient beliefs, understandings, or values with them to be able to "get it"" (89). Therefore perhaps Rossi uses irony for his critique and as the reader/spectator we have the responsibility to understand this and not only look at it as an argument which reinforces stereotypical Italian male characteristics.

The Novel: The Lion's Mouth by Caterina Edwards

There too exists a strong collection of novels by Italian Canadian artists which further develop ideas and experiences about pre and post emigration. As mentioned before Caterina Edwards has made the question of identity a common theme in her writing. Pivato writes, "This central question of identity, "Who am I?" and its many ramifications, as a woman, as an immigrant, as a Canadian on the prairies, and as a writer are the subjects of her first novel, *The Lion's Mouth,* and of her early stories" (Introduction 7). In The Lion's Mouth, Caterina Edwards looks at the idea of displacement and how the formation of identity is complex for an immigrant growing up in Canada, but it contrasts with the identity crisis that occurs when one loses oneself. The narrator and one of the protagonists Bianca Mazzin finds herself writing a homage to her cousin Marco, who as described by Edwards is "her (Bianca's) Italian self". Through this journey of writing his story, Bianca attempts to discover her own identity. Interestingly enough Marco is also suffering through what can be described as an identity crisis. A man considered as a bourgeois citizen has the heart of a communist activist. We see in the story how Bianca describes the transformation of Marco from a passionate and involved young man to one whose history catches up with him and the current degeneration of the city he tries to prevent through his architectural work reflects his own deterioration as a human. As we see the interchanging stories of Bianca and Marco what is noticeable is Bianca's need to share a part of his identity and feel a part of his history. The novel is described as one of the Italian Canadian texts in which, "the female protagonists reassess their social/gender roles and rethink their identities as ethnic Canadian women by telling stories about their own lives…(and) reveal the underlying and complex social forces which have shaped the gender/ethnic identities of the central characters" (Tuzi 31).

Marco's life is plagued by anxiety. He married a woman who was from the exact class system he condemned and unfortunately had a child that was born with disabilities. The existence of the ill child brings about a definition of identity which applies greatly to the idea of how our identities are constructed.

> "Inside, we are alike. One cell like another, one liver like another, one heart. Only in abnormality was there individuality." (27)

What creates individual identity is what is different in one person in contrast to another. Fundamentally women are created the same as are men. In terms of what creates our identity it becomes some sort of abnormality something that is individual and different. In the case of ethnic minorities in contrast to a dominant discourse, the abnormality is their race. Instead of being appreciated as individuality and accepting the individual identity, all those who share that abnormality (that particular race) become commonly identified with a constructed identity. For Bianca her struggle with identity was between being Italian/Canadian/Albertan. Language can be an identifying factor by which we construct an identity. In a discussion between Bianca and Jack her boyfriend they discuss language as a means of identification.

> "What do you call this?'
>
> 'Fry pan', I replied absently.
>
> 'Aaahh.' He was triumphant. 'Fry Pan you are an Albertan. Your words give you away.'
>
> 'Don't be silly. It was a slip. I usually say Frying pan,' knowing I didn't.
>
> 'You say fry pan,' Gloating almost as if he'd found a ten dollar bill in the gutter.
>
> 'Pedant. Stop analyzing me. It's for me to decide what I am' " (63)

In this passage Edwards illustrates how we are characterized by others through our speech, in this case Bianca is characterized as an Albertan. For the character this is a complete reversal of what she identifies herself as. It is difficult to identify Bianca, in fact the essence of Bianca is that she is totally displaced and caught among a variety of identities. She is an Italian woman by birth, a Canadian from a nationalistic perspective and Albertan from a regionalist perspective. In this passage we see her resentment that she is characterized as being an Albertan. She despises the barren and dead landscape that is wintery Alberta. Yet she cannot be a full Italian as Marco describes her as "la mia piccola cugina canadese, my little Canadian cousin..." (122). What we can apply to Bianca in this position is the graphical representation of identity as explained by Anselmi and Gouliamous. Bianca has in her the identity and formation of Venetian culture from her birth till the moment of emigration and this forms her 'Italian self'. Upon emigration she no longer forms part of the Italian society which is changing. The fact that she often returned for her summers in Italy makes it an even more complex situation because she is coming in at inconsistent intervals in which upon arrival she needs to learn how to be 'Italian' and process all of the information of Italian lifestyle and culture of that time. When she leaves she is required to change back and become 'Canadian'. She has access to this culture through her cousin Marco, but only through an osmosis like situation. It is not a direct sensory and lived experience. Meanwhile as an immigrant she has missed out on the history, culture and language that occur in Alberta and Canada prior to her immigration. She has not lived the experience that those her age and those in Alberta whom she will interact with have. She now has a direct experience with her current Albertan environment; culture and language which will detach her from her 'Italian self' and at the same time detach her from the family unit. She is a displaced individual. Therefore in the previous quote where she states, "It's for me to decide what I am" it

becomes an issue which is out of her hands. Her description of herself is, "A sensitive Italian girl who emigrated, with her parents to the prairies, who emigrated to loneliness and isolation, more, to an eventual mental and physical decay; For she was destroyed by the hostile, cold land..."(107-108). In this description we see reference to the displacement that Bianca feels as we stated, the experiences are divided into pre-emigration and post. She discusses the idea of these timeframes and the division that it causes.

> "...it illuminates the depth of the shock my family's emigration from Venice to Canada caused. For my life was split into two seemingly inimical halves, not only between the time before and after but through all my growing years: Italy in summer, Canada in winter" (108).

Her parents again are like others who emigrated, "Mamma and Papa, like many immigrants here, came not with the dream of new land, of a new, freerer world, but with the fantasy of quick profit, fast success." (110). The honesty of the description gives the sense of reality not the mysticized image of freedom and new land but the reality of financial gains not able to be met in the homeland. But the reality of the situation hits home when she becomes even more isolated and alone as a result of her father working overtime and her mother working as a waitress (110). Bianca's mother is a proud woman and attempts to battle integration into society because this society has reduced her in terms of her role and position. Bianca describes, "She began working as a waitress several evenings a week. She did not tell your mother or Aunt Elsa. Perhaps she was a bit ashamed. She was the educated one, and now she was reduced to this" (110). As a result of the reduction Bianca's mother feels bitterness towards Canadians, and thus begins the battle between Bianca and her mother in terms of her identity. Bianca's mother is highly defensive of her Italianness and as such considers

Canadian ways of life inferior. This high level of defensiveness is a result of being reduced to points like doing jobs "Canadians" would not do and being an inferior class in the eyes of the dominant discourse. So the cattiness goes both ways. The dominant discourse attacks the minority group out of fear of something that is different, and the minority class demeans the dominant discourse in trying to defend themselves. When children emigrate they experience a great deal of change in that school becomes a micro-society where the school yard often works like society does in terms of fitting and being part of that society. Bianca describes the issues the come up with her mother in terms of her defending herself from the 'Canadians' and how this affects Bianca who is growing up 'Canadian':

> "My mother in particular-well, you know how stubborn she can be, and she was determined that I would remain an Italian child. 'Do you want to be like one of these Canadians?' she would ask rhetorically, which meant, do you want to be without style, without manners, without sense?...Any slip in etiquette, a forgotten 'thank you' or a fork carelessly picked up in the right hand, brought forth – with a punctuating sigh – 'you are becoming one of them.' … I would beg her not to make me wear the clothes she had sent from Venice… I longed for ski jackets, jeans, shiny plastic shoes like everyone else's. But she was immovable. 'You aren't like everyone else. You should be proud of that…'" (113-114).

Bianca describes with great detail her struggles as an emigrant child. The interesting irony is that through this passage the Italians can be accused of generalizing Canadians. She describes Canadians as 'those Canadians' and they are looked at as being inferior to the Italians. The superiority complex that occurs can be analyzed as being part of a highly acute sense of defensiveness on the part of the Italians. They are rendered powerless because as

much as they may condemn them as being inferior in manners, style and etiquette, they are still superior and their rulers in society. Bianca's mother greatly feared losing her child to the 'other' (in her eyes) and turn upon her roots. But this poses a rather precarious position for the child. The need to fit into society and into that micro society of school is essential to the social formation for a young person. The alienation that occurs for a child has more an effect on their development because not only are they displaced from the society in which they live; they are displacing themselves from the family. Who she is changes depending on where she is. While she is with her cousin in Italy for the summers she wishes to be more Italian, but in Canada she desires to be more Canadian like, yet the failure to be completely one is an attack on her identity. In Italy she finds it difficult to express herself in Italian, her cousin tells her, "'You do very well, your accent is amazingly close. You can barely tell that you live over there.' (124). But she in this realizes that she cannot look at herself as being just Italian. She acknowledges that Marco says 'barely' indicating that there is a difference from her self and a 'native' Italian.

> "Barely. Later I stood in front of the mirror and practiced. It was in the movement of my facial muscles that I was caught out. But I couldn't loosen my jaw. My mouth wouldn't open wide enough to let the words properly roll. The Canadian style, tight and reserved, had been coded into my body and could not be unlearned." (124)

There is a constant tug of war that occurs for Bianca, because as she learns how she cannot ever be 'Italian', she will continue to not be a real 'Canadian' either. As a result of this revelation, Bianca becomes jaded in a manner in which she questions authority and refuses to conform to the society's guidelines. What is interesting about the Edwards' approach is that she then includes a point about one of Bianca's Italian Canadian friends who has succumbed

to the pressure and has assimilated into Canadian society yet she still is marginalized because of her ethnicity.

> "Like many high schools in the early sixties, status at St. Mary's depended on whether one was accepted into a sorority or not. Pretending superiority, I refused to take the test. Loretta however, was braver. She had been preparing for a year not just for any sorority, but for the most exclusive one, KKG. She had, she thought all the prerequisites: an approved hairdo, a boyfriend on a school football team, and a pert and pretty face. Her clothes were almost exactly the same as the KKG girls, though she had to rely on the Bay rather than Neiman Marcus, and she had managed to pick up the drawl and turns of phrase favored by Charlene, the club's president. It was not enough. She was rejected.
>
> 'What did I do wrong?' she demanded of Jody at one of our Saturday afternoon gatherings. 'I did everything right'
>
> 'Welll, honey…' 'Jody was starting to do it to. 'It's a bitch. No doubt about that. But you have to face it. I couldn't do anything. You were blackballed, plain and simple.'
>
> 'I didn't do nothing wrong. Nothing.'
>
> 'I know, honey. It's not you. It's your parents…They have an accent'
>
> 'You were aiming to high, Loretta. You have to face reality'" (219-220).

She is not judged for her own merits as a 'Canadian' but because her parents have an accent, which can be defined as a noticeable abnormality that makes them different from the 'Canadians', she is rejected from the socially important sorority. The sorority in this case is a key for the future of the girls who join it to make the right contacts for their future success.

In the text, Jody the typical Canadian girl, who is part of the sorority but also friends with Bianca and Loretta, describes various cases of girls being turned down because of their ethnicity or because of certain political stances. This is an example of a vicious cycle in which the ethnic always finds themselves struggling harder to find success. The contacts do not come easy because entry into exclusive social clubs as such is retained for those of the majority discourse, and as such their children will advance and others who do not share in their class, race, and political views are left on the outside looking in. The cycle continues and those ethnic minorities never enter into the circle of power because the dominant discourse reinforces itself and this is the reality that immigrants must face. Bianca is conscious of the injustices that exist towards immigrants, and cannot find peace within her. For Bianca her tie to Italy is her cousin who also is experiencing a sort of identity crisis as mentioned earlier, he though with the pressures of his situation ends up institutionalized. The underlying reason for his instability is a result of his own crisis with identity. Tuzi discusses,

> "As the protagonist's narrative indicates, ethnicity locates itself in several conflicting social orders at once. At the same time Bianca professes that she has harmonized her warring identities, she acknowledges the cleavage between herself and Marco. The transgression of cultural boundaries generates a restive, self-conscious, and complex identity. The self-consciousness of the ethnic subject is communicated through the leitmotif and imagery of performance, of the continual act of masking and unmasking" (The Social Construction 73)

The effect of having multiple identities and the personal struggle to go on in situations where this plurality exists is the unifying theme of The Lion's Mouth. The feeling of having others characterize you makes the individual disappear and for Bianca and Marco, and as a piece of fiction Edwards captures the essence of the effects of constructing and multiple identities.

As illustrated by the varying examples of works by Italian Canadian writers, the minority writer takes different approaches and means to illustrate what can be defined as a common history depending on their experiences as an immigrant. The overlying theme which transcends all the works is the fluidity and polemics involved in identity and how it is constructed in Canada. Through the works we have seen how generationally the effects of immigration affect different age groups differently, as well as gender roles defined between men and women. According to Tuzi,

> "Minority texts evoke social and cultural environments that differ from those depicted in the work of English Canadian writers or of writers who have integrated into the dominant English-based social context. The importance of this cultural distinctiveness is lessened when ethnic texts are treated solely as a type of literary sociology" (170).

The self representation that comes from these artists demonstrate with great creative ability the polemics involved in identity construction, and all seem to identify a common idea in that there is a constant movement along the lines of fluidity and the journey in social placement within Canadian society. If we look at the backgrounds of each of the writers discussed each have a common experience; all immigrated to Canada from Italy and have lived first hand the experience of being the other and have had to struggle through what their identity is, and also are speaking out in the face of being silenced. In discussing Italian Canadian writers it is a noticeable omission not to have included the work of Governor General's Award for Fiction winner Nino Ricci's Lives of the Saints *(1990)*. Recognition such as this honor for a minority honor seems to contradict the argument that minority literature and writers are excluded from the dominant discourse and marginalized. The influence of the Lives of the Saints book, the sequels In a glass house *(1993)* and Where she has gone *(1997)*, extends

beyond literature and enters a whole other medium from where information is diffused and identity is constructed and influenced in a more direct way, through visual media.

Chapter 3: Visual Media Representation

The representation of identity in the media comes in many forms. Opinions and ideals are formed by the images, which are seen and heard on a daily basis from various mediums including print, radio and television. While print and radio play a significant role, it is television that has the more wide spreading influence, as it is ever present and a source of instant information. While the internet is an undeniable source of high speed information there is still some control by the user as to what they access, it is not as subliminal as the effect that television may have. If a quick look is taken at the statistics compiled by The Culture Statistics Program Television Project, by the CRTC, Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada, in 1998, we can see some interesting data. For example, "Nearly all Canadian homes (99 percent) have at least one TV set, and nearly two thirds (59 per cent) own more than one." If on average television Canadians watch more than 22 hours of television per week and 3 out of 4 Canadians subscribe to Cable, we can definitely say that television is a major presence in the average Canadian's home.[11] With access to cable most Canadians have access to most popular North American networks and channels, therefore when discussing media influences on Italian Canadian Identity we must take into consideration American influences from various media outlets. What any type of television program or advertisement looks to do is to attract the attention of the viewer and create a spectacle which has the goal of attracting and maintaining viewers. Often they will play upon the viewer's own experiences to create drama or comedy in order to create a relationship between the viewer and the characters portrayed and as such a loyal viewer following is established. These relationships often involve creating characters that fit into the mold of how we believe people

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[11] For more information please see:

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are. To clarify, we can think of an example like the character "the girl next door" this model of a pretty, intelligent and kind girl that is the object of affection normally by the male protagonist. This is often a description that we could apply to someone in our daily lives. What television does is stylize the character and exaggerate the characteristics it is known for and creates it into a spectacle. Problems of identity occur because the superficial elements which are being exploited on television become part of the daily representation of that individual which transfers into our daily lives. Immigrants are often the target of these superficial descriptions which then transfer into our perception of what certain groups are like and often the descriptions used are stereotypical in nature. A few examples of this include: the Mafioso, the East Indian convenient store worker, the cab driver, the drunken Irish. In this section we will evaluate how visual media affects identity construction from an advertising stand point to a documentary stand point to popular television.

It is important to first look at how television and advertisements work at transmitting messages and ideas to their spectators. In the book Technopoly, Neil Postman says that the average citizen will watch approximately two million television commercials by the time they are seventy five (170). He also makes the comment that this number does not count other forms of advertisement like radio, magazines, newspapers, etc (170). Obviously television advertisements will have a stronger effect and more impact simply based on the sheer exposure offered by television over the other aforementioned forms of advertisement. To better understand how advertisements succeed in spreading the stereotypes we have to understand how they function. The advertisement whether on television or in newspapers creates sentiments of need through images and words. John J. Pungent and Martin O'Malley create a critique and analysis of television. One of the topics on which they concentrate in their book More than Meets the Eye: Watching Television Watching Us is television

advertisements. To see how advertisements work they used a book entitled Creating Ever-Cool: A Marketer's Guide to a Kid's Heart by Gene Del Vecchio. Del Vecchio works with Olgilvy and Mather Worldwide the sixth largest advertising firm. He worked creating advertisements for children when he wrote this book explaining how products are sold to children (qtd. in O'Malley, Pungente 134). Del Vecchio used a matrix to create products and advertisements for children. We can see that this system could also be applied to any consumer of any age. Pungente and O'Malley give the following explanation of Del Vecchio's matrix:

> "One column lists categories a marketer may target (e.g., sports, toys, snacks). The second column contains the key elements of a kid's emotional psyche (e.g., win, control, affection). The third column is a reminder to gratify the child's senses. The fourth column lists the child's world and culture: from fads to family. The final column offers marketing options to keep the product "ever-cool" year after year." (134)

It can be seen that the key elements to this matrix are the attention given to playing with emotions, senses and the reality in which the individual lives. The essential point that O'Malley and Pungente arrive at is "Advertising appeals to emotion. The most powerful way advertisers have to make you buy has been proven to be to appeal directly to your emotions." (135). Neil Postman shares this conclusion adding to the topic by saying, "…these tell nothing about the product being sold. Those who might buy them. What the advertiser needs to know is not what is right about the product but what is wrong about the buyer." (Technopoly 170). When it comes to the case of identity, Postman's comments are the most essential. The fact that advertisements are created to arouse emotions the images associated

with them become extremely important. These images are used to make us believe in a product and these products represent a certain element of reality, one that the spectator can identify with. Therefore if we see images of an Italian as a Mafioso representing a certain product or more often than not an Italian product, often an authentic product, we believe in this image as we believe in the product or service being advertised. For example, if we have an "authentic Italian pizza" that is advertised by a stereotypical mobster we are taking an authentic product and turning it on itself and making it into a stereotype through reinforcement by a stereotypical identification. In addition, as Postman states, advertisers concentrate on "what's wrong with the buyer" so feelings of racism, superiority and prejudice are very strong elements that are "wrong with the buyer" and help in selling a product.

The stereotype of the Italian Mafioso was developed with the success of Hollywood mafia films from early on in the 1920's. The Godfather, the film about New York mafia family the Corleones, looks at the traditional Italian values of respect, family and honor through the eyes of the mobster and his business practices. If we think about scenes and lines which have now been entrenched into popular culture from the film, all the pieces left are stereotypes. The film is considered one of the greatest films of all time, but what is remembered more often than not is the raspy voice of Vito Corleone, the violent scenes like the horse in producer Jack Walz's bed and lines like, "I'll make him an offer he can't refuse." The images of the regal Mafioso, well dressed, and a soft spoken dangerous man like Vito or Michael Corleone, along with the image of the hot headed, passionate, stupid and aggressive Sonny Corleone are representations which we identify as Mafiosi. The lure of the Mafioso character, which makes him an immortal character, is the fact that every man wants to be him. With the public success of the film the Mafioso became cool and the character became integrated into the public sphere. Once it enters popular culture, everyone begins associating

Mafiosi with Italian immigrants. The history of the Mafia is well known in the United States before Mafia movies became famous, but even in its historical past, the Mafia albeit a highly illegal endeavor always had a lure of mystery which attracted attention. In the book The Godfather and American Culture: How the Corleone's became "Our Gang" author Chris Messenger states:

> "The Godfather is a laboratory for such moral conflicts in reader identification, with so much mayhem from the heroes while readers' concepts of the larger society and citizenship are over turned, crime inscribed as business and vice versa, and the hallowed and universal signification of family invoked whenever necessary." (27)

The power of the image is very strong in writing the imagery evoked by literature or poetry, and often depends on the reader's response to how they see the work in question. Imagery in the work by Italian Canadian writers as seen in Chapter Two is a tool used to the advantage of the writer. Tuzi states, "Italian Canadian literature makes symbolic use of images which capture unique elements of immigrant culture and mainstream society. Such symbolism and imagery underline the ironic, elegiac, and manifold representation of ethnicity" (Writing the Minority Subject 24). When it comes to the media and visual representations, the spectator is given all the information as to how they should interpret the images, there is no going beyond the image as the image has the power to influence the system of beliefs as well as reinforce established representations such as stereotypes. If we take the aforementioned examples of the Mafioso the spectator stays on the superficial reading of the image and simply makes the connection Italian equals Mafioso. The image can be played with, as well as the more appealing the image is the more the spectator is willing to accept the stereotype as an acceptable representation of that particular group. So with The Godfather, despite the

moral conflicts and mayhem from these heroes as described by Messenger, the highly stylized and elegant lifestyle and depiction of the Mafioso almost makes it socially acceptable. Where there can exist a conflict is in a visual representation such as the HBO show "The Sopranos". The television drama looks at the conflicted life of Tony Soprano a New Jersey crime boss. On the surface the show and characters are not highly stylized as they are in The Godfather, by stripping off the glamour what you are left with on the surface is a program that is filled with violence and sex. The television show was condemned as being stereotypical towards Italian Americans because they were being portrayed in a negative light. The complaints came from different directions, some Italians as did not see the critical message that its producer David Chase was sending about the ideas of the American dream. Criticism from mainstream came again from those who simply remain on a superficial level of interpretation of the show and do not see the richness of metaphors used in the critique of the system which they defend. Had the viewers questioning the program gone beyond the surface the show would reveal a critique of the very system which glamorizes the lifestyle it portrays. For these reasons, the image is a very powerful tool, one example of how imagery in literature turns into a direct spectacle is the television movie production of Nino Ricci's Lives of the Saints.

Lives of the Saints Trilogy (Miniseries)

The television miniseries Lives of the Saints *(2004)* is the culmination of a trilogy of novels written by Italian Canadian writer Nino Ricci. The three novels, Lives of the Saints, In a Glass House and Where She has Gone revolve around the story of Vittorio Innocente's trials and tribulations with family and emigration. The focus of this analysis is not specifically on the written text, but on the television portrayal of the stories. Obviously the praise for the novels specifically is obvious. A winner of the 1990's Governor General's

Award for Fiction the first novel in the trilogy was also a National Best Seller. The visual representation is substantially different from its written form. Obviously any novel adapted into film undergoes significant changes; first of all, there is a time frame which must be respected, and a screenplay is written by adapting the written work into a screen product. This film project became a very profitable venture for Ricci, as the film was a joint venture between Italy and Canada. Capri films Canada and Mediatrade Italy produced the film and it was shown in Canada on CTV and Canale 5 in Italy. The trilogy incorporates the common ideas seen in the majority of Italian Canadian literature, the idea of prosperity in the new land, and the difficulty of finding oneself in the community. The novels may as a general theme touch upon the displacement felt by immigrants in Canada, but the miniseries viewed with a critical eye seems to reinforce Italian stereotypes and justifies the position of the dominant discourse in their marginalization of Italian Canadians. First of all it is important to look at the major changes that occur during the transformation from novels to film. In the original Lives of the Saints, Cristina and Vittorio live with her father, not his Aunt Teresa who in the film takes the starring role. The character of Teresa is such a minor character that she is only briefly mentioned in the first novel, and reappears when she goes to live in Canada with her brother Mario. The role of Teresa is integral in the film for she is the glue of the family. She is the single, never married sister of Mario whom has left Italy to establish a new life in Canada. She lives with Cristina, her sister in law and Vittorio her nephew. Teresa is the moral cornerstone of the family whom holds the responsibility of conserving the family's honor. The title role is played by the iconic Italian actress Sophia Loren. It is obvious that any work with the name Sophia Loren would attract attention and even draw viewers in both Canada and Italy. To have a formidable name associated with a Canadian project is enough to stimulate attention from many directions. It is highly suspect that the

protagonists change, to that extent, in the film from the novel when the actress chosen is Sophia Loren. The change in protagonist was intentional by the director and screenwriter creating the role specifically so that Loren could be the lead. Another noted change is the role of Rita's father, the illegitimate daughter of Cristina. In the trilogy we find that Cristina had an affair with a German soldier, Rita's blue eyes are the main indication in the novel of her non pure Italian origins. In Ricci's work the appearance, in a small Italian town Vale del Sole, of a German soldier who has just happened to stick around from the war ten to fifteen years later is slightly amusing. In the film we do not have a clear idea what nationality Rita's father is, but the bright blue eyes that Vittorio sees after he catches his mother with him in the stable is an indication that he is not Italian. He is also a war painter and it is not clear how much of a soldier he was. This role was played by veteran actor and singer Kris Kristofferson. In the novels, Rita does not know her father, but in the film, again perhaps to create a role she meets him through Teresa and grows close to him in her search for family. This is where film becomes very powerful, because the viewer receives a visual for the character. The obvious choices of actors and their appearance are very calculated. The implication that through blue eyes we know that Rita is not a pure Italian is dangerous because it is already establishing a set description of what an Italian looks like. By doing this, he automatically creates a set profile that identifies who is Italian and who is not in his novel. Strict physical features seen in the film identify who is Italian and who is not very clearly. Cristina first of all is a beautiful voluptuous woman with thick dark hair and large breasts, which she shows with simple peasant dresses and olive complexion. Teresa looks like the quintessential spinster. Dark clothing tight hair in a bun, but obviously Sophia Loren, who is considered to epitomize the Mediterranean woman still reinforces that this is what a real pure Italian woman looks like. The men are all dark eyed and, dark haired. The

contrast that occurs with Rita and her father to the pure Italians is obvious throughout the film. From Rita as a baby, an ivory white complexion which contrasts the olive complexion of the Italians, to her blond/reddish hair as an adult fairly thin frame and still bright blue eyes. William Bok, her father again a burly blond haired and blue eyed man whom contrasts with the dark eyed and olive toned Italian men. The only characteristics which Rita has from her mother are her lips but just as the Italians are stereotypically Italians, she is stereotypically Canadian. A major change again to enhance the role of Teresa is that in the end of the miniseries she turns out to be Vittorio's biological mother. The question that can be posed is where the writer's integrity in terms of fidelity to his story is. Obviously the book had success in print, but the reality is that it had to be revitalized for the business of media. Names sell, as do maintaining familiar profiles. Television as mentioned earlier is an extremely powerful medium. It reaches more people than print in our age of the spectacle. Where is the writer's integrity for his work and his integrity as an Italian Canadian? His original work is taken apart in order to create a show which will attract viewers. The film floats around the realities of immigration. Therefore, in looking at the characters as seen in the miniseries we can see how this film depicts Italian Canadians in a stereotypical light and simply reinforces the identity constructed by the dominant discourse.

In the film, Teresa is the sacrificed woman whom becomes pregnant by a possible rape during the War. We never find out anything about Vittorio's father in the film in fact we are left to assume that the rape was perpetrated by an Italian soldier since Vittorio is considered a pure bread Italian. Teresa is constantly the peace maker and tries to avoid family conflict by keeping secrets. Every scene in which conflict is about to begin, Teresa often speaks up telling everyone, "come on lets eat". A statement like "come on lets eat" is highly stereotypical of the depiction of Italians as being obsessed with cuisine and food, and

clearly to solve any problem it is necessary to have a full stomach. Her lessons to Vittorio on how to make her family's secret recipe for cannelloni and her supply of prosciutto and other Italian delights become a mockery of the authentic. She herself is the stereotypical mother whom has to be concerned with everyone's issues and who sticks herself in other people's business even though it does not apply to her. Again perhaps it is trying to tie into the Italian foundation of the family, but again the exaggeration simply becomes a stereotype.

Cristina is the typical attractive Mediterranean woman. Her appearance is more stereotypical but her actions which attempt to be the 'a-typical' Italian woman actually reinforce some stereotypes. She is passionate and quick to anger. In the town the other women discuss her affair and call her a puttana. When Vittorio gets in a fight with other boys when they comment on his mother's pregnancy, Cristina marches over to the mother's house where the women of course are cooking and attacks the mother of the boy who attacked Vittorio. In the film, she comes to Canada not to find her husband, but to find William her lover and father of her unborn child. When she dies Bok refuses to take the girl and Vittorio, who then go to Vittorio's father who ignores the fact that his wife had an affair.

Mario is very much the Italian Canadian immigrant, a farmer with a green house where his primary cultivation is tomatoes. He moved to Canada to find prosperity with his brother and they establish the agricultural business in Mersea, Ontario. The Italian man finds his honor and name disgraced with the deception of his wife, which is why he can never accept Rita as his own. Vittorio is treated like a son, but he also has a detachment since he is really his uncle. Mario is depicted as the brute and aggressive passion driven Italian; he solves problems with violence and shouting in an animal like manner. He is abusive towards Vittorio and dedicates his life to his greenhouse. In the film he kills himself in front of Rita whom is at first the target of his rifle. The torment kills him and as such the solution is to kill

himself. In a twist, when he dies he leaves Rita a trust fund for school which Vittorio is to administer for her. His brother and a partner in their business, Innocente & Son, is the typical cheap and money hungry immigrant. He loathes the fact that Mario has left everything to Vittorio even though he is not his son and that he leaves funds for Rita. Mario gives Rita up, in the film, to the parents of her friend Elena. They ask to adopt her and he signs her over as if she were an animal.

Rita is a girl of her time, from the sixties very liberal with no sense of responsibility but extremely displaced in her environment. With no real family ties other than Vittorio she is an infuriating character who acts like a clueless teenager throughout. Perhaps in playing the devil's advocate, one could say that her state of alienation has forced her to be childlike but the visual aspects make her a character that we lack sympathy for. She takes advantage of Vittorio's psychosis and takes him to bed not caring that he is her brother. Her finding her father seems to solve all her problems and she leaves Vittorio, who has become partially insane because of her, out alone to deal with his own trauma.

Throughout the novels we can see Vittorio as a tortured soul and can sympathize with his position. In the film Vittorio is a passionate character that mires in confusion and is seen as a barbaric incestuous man ruled by passion. This very stereotypical depiction does not cause the viewer to feel sorry for his state but to think the worst about Italians. First of all, in the film Vittorio as a child says to his mother, "ti amo mamma" In the Italian language there exists a very important difference between "ti amo" and "ti voglio bene". "Ti amo" is reserved for lovers, couples, and people who express passion for one another. "Ti voglio bene" expresses love but the gentler spiritual love, one between parents and children, good friends etc. His passion for his mother and her dying transforms into an obsession with his sister. As children, before she is adopted, he is her caregiver along with his aunt Teresa. He

feels his obligation to protect her yet also he feels she is the last connection to his beloved mother. As he grows we see him become a teacher to aboriginal students in the arctic. In the books Vittorio goes to teach in Africa but perhaps as it is a Canadian production for Canadian television we had to include the token salute to aboriginals, also a displaced group of people. Vittorio has a relationship with another young teacher whom he ignores for most of the film choosing Rita over her. His father's suicide sets into motion his downfall, now having to take charge of the family tomato business; he takes refuge with Rita in Toronto as he buys her an apartment to live in while she studies. There we see how his incestuous desires for his sister culminate with them having intercourse. Since he does see his mother in her it is possible to make a play with the aforementioned "ti amo" statement and his incestuous desires extend from his mother to his sister. After he sleeps with Rita he hides on the farm and then follows Rita to Italy. There we see Vittorio insane with jealousy for Rita's father and ready to kill him so he can have her to himself. The depiction of this passionate, incestuous and violent man is an exaggeration of stereotypes which in this film paints Italian men in a very poor light. The end finds Vittorio cured of his mental afflictions by calling Teresa mamma perhaps because really his desires for his mother and sister were not as incestuous as he perceived. He takes back his girlfriend, a Canadian girl, and continues the family business like a good Italian boy. He has a little boy Mario named after the "nonno" and happily has his wife pregnant with another.

What this visual depiction of the trilogy becomes is a mockery of an overly passionate Italian family whose passion has driven them to insanity. Very little is seen of the struggle that is incurred by immigrant families, in fact Mario seems to have quite a bit of savings upon his death and the family business continues. In the film, Vittorio's confusion and displacement is not a result of Canadian society rejecting him as a member, but because

of his aunt's secrets and hidden agendas. One thing that is visible is the reaction of Rita's adopted parents towards the Innocente family. They are highly disgusted at the state of how they act, which can only be defined as barbaric animals. The disgust by those of the dominant discourse is consistent with reactions described by other ethnic writers, but the manner in which this family is portrayed is disgusting and paints Italian Canadians in a very poor light.

The problem with this visual depiction is that since it has been touted as being a raw look at the history of Italian Canadian migration, people will see this product and believe that this is reality of the Italian Canadians history. Also, it reinforces with images the stereotypes which are spread about Italian Canadians. What is creates is a vicious cycle which causes things to remain static. The general public will continue to believe in the stereotype, the constructed identity which is reinforced in this case by one of its own, Nino Ricci. Having the writer reinforce this identity makes it difficult for other Italian Canadian artists to break away from these with the misconceptions.

The story itself touches upon the surface of the immigration discourse; obviously we can see the effects on the family unit that occurred when Mario emigrated to Canada leaving his wife and son back in Italy. The character which embodies more so the affects of immigration is Mario; yet the portrayal on film is the opposite. The emphasis is consistently placed on Vittorio and his emigration experience. Mario experiences the regret and guilt that sometimes occurs with immigrants when they realize the long term effects of their decision to leave their homeland. Much like Vito in Mary di Michele's "Mimosa" poem we see a man who has reached his economic success in the end, but has sacrificed the family life and values which are integral to his being. Vito looks at his daughter Lucia as being corrupted by the Canadian way, and for Vito this bring his sense of regret in that had he been in Italy his

beloved daughter would have grown in his own image. Mario, in the film, is obviously conflicted, had he not left his wife she would not have betrayed him and he would have fathered his own biological children. Instead, he is left with no legacy as Vittorio is not his biological child and Rita is a constant reminder of his failure.

The director of the film, Jerry Ciccoritti describes his experience in making the miniseries as autobiographical.

> "The main character Vittorio is me, I know this guy, I know this world, I know the emotions. It's also a way for me to pay homage to my cultural background, the Italian Canadian immigrant experience. I've finally been offered subject manner with which to work out my own private demons...The young Italian Canadian man who's born and raised in a culture of shame and guilt even though he didn't commit a crime, is exactly the crisis state of every Italian Canadian of my generation... Part of my larger vision to show all aspects of my country to my countrymen ..." [12]

The film does not truly touch on the Italian Canadian immigrant experience, perhaps only through tokenism by having characters that portray 'token' roles of Italian stereotypes. Vittorio's demons in the film are not as a result of the immigration experience, but a result of the deception and secrets of his family. His shame and guilt does not come from being an Italian Canadian but through his own twisted sense of love and family, again this a result of Mario's decision to emigrate, but not through his experiences in Canada. It is an overstatement by Ciccoritti to say that every Italian Canadian of his generation exists in crisis; each experiences the hybrid situation of displacement and living with multiple identities. Gabriella Martinelli, the producer, also looked at the project as a personal

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[12] Ibid. 7

connection to her own emigration experience. Regarding her upbringing she states, "We were raised in this very strange environment whereby all the social order in our house Italian, but outside was Canadian. Unless you've been through that, it's hard to understand how schizophrenic that can be." Perhaps more validation could be put on Martinelli's experiences since she herself emigrated from Italy; it is a schizophrenic situation because you are travelling through constructed identities. If it was the intention of the film to exploit this, the product is unsuccessful. In fact it is the representation of the suffocating Italian family unit that brings shame and guilt for the protagonist. This visual representation simply hinders the effort to make a constructive statement on the Italian Canadian experience which finds its basis in floating between identities.

An essential contradiction noted in the Press Kit is the information on the screenplay. The screenplay is the film version of the original story which underwent drastic changes. In the Press Kit the change by the screenwriter Malcolm MacRury in making Teresa the protagonist is addressed, "He wrote the role of Teresa especially for Sophia Loren. Martinelli notes, "Teresa is the powerful thread linking the three novels. She becomes the glue that holds the three stories together." MacRury explains:

> "We needed an adult protagonist to unify the three books for miniseries; an adult character to be at the heart of the drama to bridge the past and present, Italy and Canada. There isn't one in the novels except for Vittorio who ages from 7 to 26. I wanted to give him a constant traveling companion, creator, destroyer to accompany him on his epic journey. Teresa, therefore, is one part 'La Maestra', the holy school teacher in Valle del Sole; one part Cristina's father, the Mayor of the town; one part

> Aunt Teresa who comes to Canada to look after Vittorio and his bastard sister; and one part pure invention. I think this combination makes the drama work."[13]

It all comes down to making the drama work, thus is the problem with media and the spectacle. The visual product which reaches the masses and has the opportunity to use its widespread reach to inform and challenge the mainstream perception but The Lives of the Saints miniseries simply reinforces common stereotypes and constructed identities. As previously quoted,

> "Writers such as Neil Bissoondath and Nino Ricci have achieved prominent positions with in this context. I bring up their names only to emphasize that my denial of Italian nationalism does not correspond to Bissoondath's attack on ethnicity or Ricci's cynical abuse of Italian emigrant history in his recently complete novelistic trilogy. Their critiques remain superficial and self-serving devices that are only meant to raise them as individuals above what they appear to view as the dung-heap of immigrant and ethnic cultures" (Verdicchio) [14]

Ricci, in essence sells his work out to the dominant discourse, a term "cultural prostitution", once heard in conversation sums up this process. He uses his ethnicity to exploit his work and his own ethnicity to be accepted into mainstream society. The issues which arise with this type of process is that it is a vicious circle which continues to reinforce a stereotypical depiction of Italian Canadians, despite efforts of other artists who do not receive similar credit for their work, but use their ethnicity to make important social commentary about their cultural group as well as about contemporary society. An example of this is Paul Tana's Caffé Italia.

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[13] Ibid. 9
[14] http://www.alef-fvg.it/emigrazione/approfondimenti/Verdicchio.htm. 21 Jan 2008.

Paul Tana's Caffé Italia

Caffé Italia is a documentary and drama (docu-drama) that actually looks at the immigration experience of Italian Canadians in Montreal and Quebec. In this text we are able to see the experience of the immigrant in a bicultural society. The first thing one notices is the different accents and language. You could call it a sort of Franco-Italian, a combination of French and Italian, which is automatically connected to English through bilingualism. The opening scene seems paradoxical in itself, there is an Italian national soccer match where the Italians are winning and the commentary is in French. We see the struggle in arriving with such hopes and upon arrival their only true qualification was worn hands. By looking at their hands they would be welcomed as hard workers. Letters back home to wives or family talked of the climate and meeting others who had emigrated and sticking together in their Italian Communities.

Costanzo Amico worked in the tunnels and had no choice, his wage was two dollars a day the building of the CPR railway recruited Italian immigrants in which regional differences were eliminated. Sicilians, Calabrese and Bolognese... all working together. Tana creates interesting interludes of almost theatre like representations. We see one where there is a Gangster like leader of the workers who makes contracts between CPR and the immigrants, since everyone wanted a job with CPR he too would profit by taking a fee to place immigrant in contact. It seems to show how everyone took advantage of the newly arrived and tried to exploit them for their labor. Even this character that is Italian clearly has made the right connections with those in power and now has learned how to play the exploitation game. A Fordian way of success, where one individual profits from the group, and the individual man can obtain riches: the American dream.

The role of women is looked at through very honest depictions in their discussions. Women of course were not allowed to emigrate alone. So each anxiously desired the opportunity to marry a man who wanted to emigrate or be chosen by returning men looking for wives. The same situation as Maria and Cesare in Edwards' "Prima Vera". While companionship was certainly a reason for men wanting to marry, they also became a great help at home or with the farms and gardens while families grew. The fraternity that existed amongst immigrants helped to bring a little piece of home into their new French Canadian lives, homemade was extremely important. The garden which is stereotyped when discussing Italian Canadians was actually a necessity. With families of four to five children, keeping homemade materials was a practical solution to the money shortage and the garden was the sustenance they needed to survive. Marino Tuzi addresses the garden as a form of imagery in Italian Canadian life,

> "the recurrence of the garden image, part of the first generation's attempt to reconstruct their agrarian surroundings in the new world, is a culturally charged motif, the symbolic meanings of which produce an ambivalent view of the immigrant experience. The garden is simultaneously a testament to the persistence of the old way of life and the celebration of one of the most important accomplishments of the Italian Canadian: the acquisition of a home. Yet the cultivation of a small garden in the backyard implies that the former immigrant has undergone a process of diminution; he/she has given up the open fields of the family farm for a little patch of land in the new country (often circumscribed by an ominous urban-industrial topography)" (Writing the Minority Subject 24).

This is a clear example of how something which was precious and a tool of survival for Italian Canadians and a piece of authenticity becomes reappropriated by the dominant discourse and is used often to make fun of and alienate Italian Canadians.

The statement "La patria non dà da mangiare sempre" *(the homeland does not always provide something to eat)* is the essential reason for emigration. The homeland does not always supply enough opportunity to live which is why the emigration wave hit, but despite the homeland not giving economic opportunities for success, the roots and culture still remained a source of pride for Italian Canadians. When War time hit, Italians even abroad were expected to be proud of their origins. When Air Marshal Italo Balbo made his Century of Progress tour from Rome and made a stop in Montreal, Italian Canadians described it as Christ coming, and it made them feel like the patriots went to visit them as if they still belonged[15]. The declaration of war in 1940 brought hardship for Italian Canadians. Just as they had been proud of their origins by seeing the progress and pride shown by the patriots and Mussolini, the feeling of belonging soon faded as they were left to suffer the consequences of a decision made thousands of miles away. Italian immigrant Monaco states they were imprisoned because Allied Canada feared their revolutionary powers. Even immigrants that had been naturalized since the early 1910's were questioned and assumed as being members of the Fascist party. Some immigrants were also exploited for funds by their beloved patria. They would send money to *il Duce* and felt they were patriots till death, yet

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[15] Italo Balbo was the famous Italian Fascist Air Marshall and former Governor of Libya under Mussolini's regime was believed to be successor to Mussolini. Balbo became famous for his Century of Progress tour. A figure of this magnitude conducting such an excursion gave the Italians someone to look up and as such a source of pride for the advancements their country was experiencing. Also the image of him coming down from the skies gave him an aura of a 'Christ' like coming. Balbo was killed by an air assault, but it is heavily suspected that Mussolini ordered his assassination as he opposed some of the leader's policies on the war and his laws on racism, in addition, his popularity internationally made him a threat to Mussolini's powers. For more information see: The Flight of the Fascist by James Ballowe published in the Chicago Reader 9/7/93 but can be accessed at:

. 02 Feb 2008.

their leader cared nothing about the states of these patriots in Canada whom fell outside of Canadian society and were not defended by the society they believed protected them. Petawawa Camp was where many Italian men from Quebec and Ontario were sent on suspicion of internal insurgence, while their wives worked and hired lawyers to get them out. After the war ended there occurred another influx of emigration from Italy. Immigration papers were sent so families could come to Canada as well as money for the voyage. In Halifax, Tana includes a reenactment of what would be a couple arriving in Canada with the wife bringing in her suitcase a salami and bread from the hometown, which is taken after being told that these items are prohibited from entering in Canada. In an irony they are taking the bread right out of their mouths at Pier 21. The lifestyle was difficult, often resulting in men going to work in the steel industry. One interviewee, Pasquale Tarasco, discusses how they thought it would be different. Upon arriving, the harsh climate frightened them and the quick solution to their problems did not exist. Again Tana includes a theatrical interlude where Italian men and women are getting on a city bus chanting "A lavorare si deve andare" *(one must go to work)* and one is quoted by saying that through work and sweat one could "tirare la famiglia avanti" *(to make the family get by).* An interesting revelation revealed by one Rosa Ruvo is that she worked more in Canada than she would have had she stayed back home. Working as a seamstress she discusses how one would do jobs here that they would never have done in Italy; perhaps an inner reflection on the desperate search to obtain economic success. Obviously these individuals would come without knowing the language and often without transferable education. Like many immigrants today who may come from their homelands with medical degrees and law degrees since their education is not transferable they are reduced to take on jobs that the dominant discourse will not do. Tana's look at the actual situation upon immigration is not drama filled and over the top like Ricci's

Lives of the Saints miniseries, but its honesty does not even acknowledge stereotypes; attention is not placed on events such as gathering to eat or accents. What is problematic is that Caffé Italia never had the audience that Lives of the Saints did. Marta Bonato discusses the duality that occurs for Italian Canadians. She states "Quebecois mais Italienne" as she describes herself. The "choix entre deux cultures" causes problems of security and includes missing a part of the self. The "unione della famiglia" can be anywhere they state and "le père e le fils" is always father and son. In the end as a very simple analogy this is the same for any cultural group.

Tony Nardi, an Anglo Quebecois and Italian Canadian, discusses how change is too drastic and not integrated into the community. In the family there exist rules that are rigid. For Italian traditions are important which lead to an extensively proud race. There is a desire to defend Italianess. For example the existence of a garden, there is pride, but here the neighbor is watching and as much as Italianess is defended there comes a sense of shame from being different and a desire to not be alienated because of their desire to defend their culture. This becomes the evolution into assimilation and makes it seem like the ethnic group is gladly deciding to change. The ethnic group must always change to conform, it is not the dominant discourse that changes to adapt to the traditions that are valued by the ethnic group. For example when it comes to language the interviewees all spoke French or French Canadian French with noticeable heavy influence of Italian. The language they speak is not one or the other but a mix of Canadian French and Italian.

In the final scenes we see Tony Nardi and Pierre Curzi, the main actors in the theatrical scenes, having a discussion about their own identity. Others define them as "Italian" yet his mother describes him as not being a "true Italian". He discusses the lack of knowledge that exists of his Italian roots and "what Italians do". He addresses the need to do

this project as a means of finding something hidden about oneself. Perhaps trying to make a tie to that identity of 'Italian' which they are defined as, but Nardi describes the experience as being a tourist discovering something new. In Toronto they are identified as "Italian" (an ethnic), because the binary that exists is English versus the ethnic. In Quebec, they are not Quebecois or Italian. In having a knowledge of what constructs a 'Quebecois' identity, 'anglais' identity , or 'italien' identity their own identity is defined as being none of them. In a project like Caffé Italia we see accounts and reflections about the identity of the Italian Canadian, from Italian Canadians who have lived the experience. As a visual product their words become more meaningful and the spectator can see the conflict that exists with multiple identities.

When attempting to integrate into a society, the difficulty in belonging becomes more problematic when one does not fit into any of the dominating discourses that rule and have control in that society. Everyone has a role in a society, and even if one has a defined role in the society, if they do not belong to one of the dominating groups, they are dispensable. In the film Barbed Wire and Mandolins, we see how individuals of Italian origins were hunted and interned upon the declaration of war by Mussolini. Italians who became Canadian citizens and their children who were Canadian by birth were deemed subversive to the state and treated as alien citizens.

Barbed Wire and Mandolins

We hear a detailed account of how as of June 10, 1940 when Mussolini declared war on the Allies, the Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King authorized the internment of all individuals of Italian origin who under reasonable suspicion could endanger the state. As recounted by the film in Montreal, anyone who had physical features that were deemed of

Italian origin was taken to internment camps. Hundreds spent years in internment camps under the War Measures Act. The individuals need not be charged with a crime, their crime was simply being identified as Italian.

A shoemaker describes his story and encounter with officials in detail. At ten o'clock a.m. war had been declared and by two to three in the afternoon, two or three RCMP were at his shop to arrest him. He tells of the conversation he had with the officers about how Italy being at war was not his fault and asked what he could really do with the war zone being three thousand kilometers away. Tears fill his eyes as he describes his train ride to Petawawa Camp where on the train he reassures the RCMP guarding the group that they can rest because they are not criminals, the criminals were the ones who arrested them. Fear turned to hostility including banning Italian in local churches, as use of a foreign language could mean plotting. By taking away ones use and freedom of language their means of communicating are impaired. Furthermore, language in this case is a means of identifying someone as being of Italian origin. The individuals in most cases were Canadians, but if we apply the idea of constructing identity we can see how the language became an indicator by which the dominant discourse judged and identified these citizens as 'enemy aliens'. The question posed in the film is, "... if they are Canadian how can they be enemy aliens..." To answer this is a very simple and superficial look at the situation. If they were not like the dominant discourse they were the other and as such not really 'Canadian' in the eyes of those who possess the power. This maybe a superficial answer to an important question, but obviously those in power at the time did a superficial analysis of the danger and came up with a simplified decision.

Italian Canadians at the time held a sense of pride that they were both Italian and Canadian. Many had left an 'impoverished' land and saw the country resurrected by

Mussolini so they felt a sense of pride, knowing that their homeland was progressing without knowing of the violence that came with Fascism. Social clubs like the "Sons of Italy" were popular throughout North America and were simply used as a meeting point for Italians to share in their nostalgia for home. As seen in Caffé Italia, there were some members who supported the Fascists as members of the party, but everyone who pertained to one of these groups was taken by authorities and designated as threats. An Italian priest describes how the word 'Italian' meant dangerous and Mafioso and that their blood was tainted. Without looking at the individual identity of people the label of 'Italian' became enough to classify them and the label became their identification.

Antonino Mazza, aforementioned critic and writer reveals the following statistics; Out of 112 000 thousand Italians, half were Canadian citizens. 30 000 were listed as enemy aliens. In the United States of 6 million only 228 were briefly interned. Of all allied countries, Canada had the strictest politics in place to deal with possible insurgents. Mazza describes it as a 'war on the home front with its own people'. According to Mazza, the intentions by administrations, were to pay back spoils of war to REAL Canadians which in this case we can define as being of English or French origins for the most part overall those of the dominant discourse and those who form the power structure. He recalls how 'this marks the history of Canada even in our time' and when posed the question of "Where would you rather live?" or rebutted with the comment, 'Go back where you came from' His response is that a democracy is dynamic relationship between government and the populous, so by looking at what he does not say, we can come to the conclusion that the Canadian Government's actions were no better than the acts of Fascism which they themselves feared.

The treatment of Italian Canadians as they were being placed on trains in Toronto is nothing short of being treated like animals. "During round up they were herded about and

were cursed by patriotic soldiers... they were paraded.... People from Toronto showed up to see the spectacle... Looking at strange foreigners who were a threat to Canada at least were now in Captivity..." (Barbed Wire and Mandolins) They were booed at, cheered as they were placed on trains, people shouted and their families feared to become associated with their loved ones. If we examine the scene we can see the hierarchy of power at work, those with power and of the dominant discourse looking below to those foreigners, whom they feel are not 'Canadian'. They are identified as being threats and their captivity is turned into a spectacle in which the dominant discourse can parade there power over them almost saying 'you will never be like us'.

In Montreal, Dan Iannuzzi's father, a publisher at Casa D'Italia, was taken to Petawawa. When the family received mail it was stamped POW for Prisoner of War. Every measure was taken to ensure that all Italian Canadians were identified as such and that they be judged by the constructed identity. They did not last long in neighborhoods because landlords did not want Italians living in their properties. Iannuzzi claims they moved eight times in the two and a half years his father was gone. The only solution to him was 'the Italian art of making do – arrangiarsi'.

Inmates were gradually released from the camps. Reviews would occur in which prisoners were asked certain questions like, what is your view of Mussolini, Canadian democracy and war. This review determined their imminent danger. Justice Heinman, a respected former member of the Senate, resigned because he felt he was involved in a charade. The reason for internment is because they were born of Italian parents, as if saying we are responsible for whom we are born from. This only reiterates the superficial level of identification that occurred. These individuals were ashamed to be Italian, could not be Canadian, so what is left in terms of identity other than a shattered and fragmented identity

and a sense that one only has an identity which is constructed for them. Some were asked if they were Canadian citizens if they would go into the army. Benny Ferri was drafted into Canadian army after being interned for being Italian, this is the confusion that exists for him at the time. "What makes me" he asks "how can you be enemy today and tomorrow not". What occurs is a game of power; the dominant discourse displays its power over those lower on the hierarchy showing how they can be played with. There is no answer to the question of enemy today and patriot tomorrow except convenience. Those with power manipulate and play with those inferior to them. The worst problem is that they play with their identity leaving them a shattered image of who they are. In this case, a man is conflicted in believing he is an enemy than expected to fight for the country that considers him a criminal, only because it is convenient for those at power to have soldiers representing Canada on the front. Communities became shattered with these events, memories of being reunited and reintegrated into society were not always happy. Uncertain futures were waiting on the outside. Some were friendly on return but some shunned you, for one man an uncle and aunt were afraid to go see him, they feared being associated with an Italian. In one instance a group of men threatened to burn his house down if he did not leave town. RCMP went and talked with the men and told him to leave town because they could not provide them with adequate protection. While Caffé Italia and Barbed Wire and Mandolins look to tell the story and give a realistic view into the immigration experience and the identity of Italian Canadians by looking at history and context, a superficial attempt at defining Italian Canadian identity and culture is seen in Enigmatico the National Film Board of Canada documentary.

Enigmatico

The documentary Enigmatico was directed by David and Patricia Fogliato. This film looks at various Italian Canadian artists and their exploring of "the relationship between the immigrant experience and the creative process, broaching issues of identity and culture that go to the core of what it means to be Canadian" (Ricci, Nino). The film differs from the representations of Italian Canadians as seen in Barbed Wire and Mandolins and Caffé Italia in that the characterizing of Italian Canadians is taken from Italian Canadians who have pursued careers in the arts and their perception of identity in Canada for the immigrant. The film presents contradictory visions by differing artists, bordering at times on stereotypical representations of the artists. The issue that arises as a result is the fact that as a viewer the product shows us these Italian Canadians expressing themselves in stereotypical manners which in turn reinforces the dominant discourse's conception of stereotypes. At times we see glimpses of artists who have a true sense of the conflict that exists and reflect critically on the displacement that occurs for them as artists and ethnics. These artists are overshadowed by equally represented artists who present themselves as a stereotype, and criticize others for the stereotype which they help to spread.

Sculptor Carmelo Arnoldin describes a desire to belong in the film. He describes a sentiment of unsettlement, "having one foot on one place and one on the other" and as such "not having a place". This expression of being part of two worlds and at the same time being part of neither is the displacement that occurs even more so for the artists because the artist tends to be the marginalized professional in society. There occurs a double displacement not only as a result of ethnicity but as a result of the choice of profession.

Poet and writer Mary di Michele insightfully discusses the concept of the "return" to Italy and of how in returning to Italy she was able to get a sense of what Italy was. This was something that she admits is foreign to her as, she herself was an immigrant at a very young age. It is possible to contrast her with Vince Mancuso the painter in her presentation of what the "return" means. For Vince, he describes the return as being almost native in nature. He describes the house where one returns to as being a focal point and the location of all the action. The house also contained three generations including parents and grandparents and was a place which he says you could 'always go back' to. What he focuses on is the property in terms of legalities. He explains how no one could dispute that the home was theirs and this was why return was never a problem and you could 'always go back'. What is lacking in this is the fact that the argument is simply focused on the space in terms of territory. Of course one can physically return to the space that you once occupied, but in terms of integration and re-entering the society you left becomes another discourse. You will never be accepted and looked at as if you had never left, which is the attitude that Mancuso implies upon the return. When looking at how different the views between di Michele and Mancuso are, it is interesting to see how two individuals working seemingly from the same position, have such contradicting views of a similar discourse. The documentary seems to go back and forth between artists who have a consciousness of their position and the threat that exists to their individual identity, and artists who embrace a constructed identity which reflects them as being stereotypically Italian. For example, Filippo Salvatore a well known Italian Canadian writer and poet voices over a scene of his children making wine in a traditional fashion with a recitation of his poem "Three poems for Giovanni Caboto". The scene attempts to illustrate the poets' creative ability to discuss immigration and identity in his poetry but contradicts itself showing how his children make wine and sing. He emphasizes

the importance of making wine by hand and the retaining of a peasant reality. As he drinks wine, he describes wine making as a love affair and like making love which can turn out good or not good. The remedial description of wine making by Salvatore makes one doubt his own abilities to critically discuss a discourse, one even forgets he is capable of creating poetry that can be seen as critical. The entire depiction is highly stereotypical of the children working like ignorant farmers while the Italian man can only think of sex and his passion. The interview conducted with Vince Mancuso's parents also says little of the Italian people when the discussion turns to Vince's decision to become a painter. He and his family discuss how he was displaced from his own family, he became the brunt of jokes. His father at one point asks him whether he thought he was going to be Picasso or Michelangelo. Vince states that those who cared about him thought he was on drugs and others cried and lamented his decision to the point that he had to distance himself from his family. His father states, that his career choice is brave and beautiful but that he does not understand the work he does, while his mom reiterates that they will support him until their deaths despite their desires he would be a lawyer. This whole exchange is so extremely stereotypical in the depiction that it completely destroys the credibility of the documentary which is supposedly supposed to show Italian Canadian's accomplishments and their identity. The mother and father are depicted as ignorant immigrants who do not give value to an artistic career in their lack of understanding. The family who cries and makes up stories about one of their members when they do not follow the 'correct path' is very much a stereotypical image of the family. The overbearing family who does not mind their own business and the mother who prays and will support her beloved son reflects the mother-son dynamic so often stereotyped as in the CBS program "Everybody loves Raymond". A program like "Everybody Loves Raymond" pokes fun at the Italian American family by using stereotypical characters. The

overbearing mother Marie who is obsessed with her youngest son, Raymond and has an unhealthy jealousy towards her daughter in law Deborah; the small talk and moody father who is waited on hand and foot by his wife; the older brother lost in the shadow of his brother, all living across the street from one another. The program is considered comedic because of its familiar depiction of Italian Americans. The spectacle is popular because it renders the immigrant into a comedy which does not go further than the surface in its interpretation of the Italian immigrant family. Mancuso's decision to become an artist as depicted by this documentary could very well have been an episode on "Everybody Loves Raymond" before its series end in 2005.

Mary di Michele reads part of her poem 'Mimosa' and discusses leaving Italy in the fifties. She comments on getting cut off from social changes in Italy and the difficulties that arise as a child moving in that interpreting normal generational conflicts of value are intensified. According to di Michele, "English things/Canadian things that their (immigrant parents) children want, becomes a rejection of themselves". It continues to revisit the idea of missing history, and how for the child, their ties to Italy are not as strong as their ties to Canada and for the parents this can be a rejection of the Italian self. For di Michele, she felt she could not afford to be nostalgic or sentimental because the Italian self was contradictory in that it was a "source of love laughter and warmth" and at same time it told her she was "less because she was a woman". The gender roles imposed by the strict and traditional family lifestyle of Italians was not the same as the lifestyle in Canada and as children growing in Canada they were less likely to want to live the restricted family lifestyle that gave women "few future possibilities (where) women had very traditional expectations (and) no dimension to their lives". Poet Gianna Patriarca reiterates the role described by di

Michele. She describes how new immigrant girls were expected to be secretaries, find a nice man, have kids and die.

Playwright Maristella Roca discusses how she did not realize she was Italian until the Italian theme came through in her writing. A dramatization of one of her plays has these men talking over each other in made up Italian accents talking about construction and their girlfriends. She goes on to describe Italians, as she sips on wine, as being in a,

> "Celebration of the human spirit (and doing it with) such violence with a passion that verges on loosing ones own flesh. So forceful it is a tidal wave that comes fifty times a day… Never a lot of calm but when there is, its waiting for the next tidal wave. That is life, it's a dance it's music… everyone shouting… music to my ears" (*Enigmatico*)

By looking beyond the highly dramatic description there is little left of the identity she describes for Italian Canadians other than aggressive and ruled by passion and not intelligence; that every interaction an Italian has could break into a song and dance routine at any moment. The lack of reality in the description and its reliance upon a stereotypical depiction simply continues to reinforce the vision of what an Italian Canadian is as per the directors Fogliato and Mortin. There vision continues to be reinforced with a repeated display of a ritual procession of the Madonna, along with the 'ice cream quartet' the Quartetto Gelato.

Continuing in the sandwich effect of the shooting of the documentary, we have interesting comments regarding the issues of assimilation. From Montreal, Antonio D'Alfonso discusses how cultural acceptance was not possible by the mainstream. The dynamics of Quebec are used to Marco Micone's advantage as he writes in both official

languages as well as in Italian. When addressing French issues he writes in French and uses Italian when he wants to convey legitimate arguments or issues which appear in Italian newspapers. The knowledge of these languages gives him power as a writer in terms of his ability to communicate as well as a tool to illustrate his broad knowledge.

Micone discusses multiculturalism in Quebec as a much more debated idea because it originated from English Canada. According to Micone, multiculturalism is considered a strategy or ideology which is aimed at reducing the Quebecois people and their culture to the same level as any other ethnic group within Canada no matter how small. For Francophones in Quebec and throughout Canada who perceive themselves as foundational it is unacceptable to be treated as any other ethnic group. The discourse touches upon the politics of biculturalism. As one of the founding nations, despite the Francophones only being a dominant discourse in Quebec, the politics of bilingualism and their position in Government gives them a higher position within the sphere of influence with English Canada.

While Antonio D'Alfonso presents important ideas of cultural acceptance, one of the chosen lines for him to say and have proudly portrayed is "I am a wop, I am Italian". The use of the racial slur to define Italian immigrants is a double edged sword because by having an Italian immigrant say that they are a "wop" they are in turn giving permission for others to define them as 'wops'. The slur which is supposed to stand for "with out papers' is none the less reducing Italian Canadians to a group who used illegal means to enter into the country. This in turn reinforces the image of the criminal Italian which then reinforces the stereotype of the Mafioso. As a cycle, uses of racial slurs or stereotypical representations by members of that ethnic group can work against the group and reinforce the stereotypes and representations, which they try to escape. One critical question which can be seen as playing

devil's advocate in this case is whether or not by having the ethnic take a slur or term or behavior which they are stereotyped as and mocking it or using it, if it in fact gives more power to the ethnic than it does to the dominant discourse. For example, the popular Canadian comedian, Russell Peters, bases his comedy on his ethnicity and other ethnic groups. In his biography on his website it reads, "Russell has made his reputation by speaking to people that no one else is talking to. Much of his comedy speaks to immigrant communities around the world - Indian, Arab, Caribbean, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and other South and Southeast Asian communities that remain invisible to the mainstream media and sometimes to the broader white population…Russell's comedy is rooted in the reality of growing up brown in white Canadian society. "My family and I are Anglo-Indian," Russell explains. "Anglo-Indians are a community of Indians from India who mixed with the British when they occupied India. Both of my parents are Anglo-Indian and their parents were Anglo-Indians and so on"[16]. The use of terms like brown and referring to Anglo Canadians as the 'white population' somehow to the ear seems racist. It is interesting because if we hear 'Italian population' we tend to think nothing of it, but if we refer to the dominant discourse in a somewhat reducing term such as 'white' it shakes the foundation of what is status quo. So could we say that by making fun of his own ethnicity and also making the dominant discourse a kind of minority in his own world and also in the worlds of the ethnic groups he discusses is he subverting the system and making the dominant discourse a minority? It is a difficult question, because he does subvert the dominant discourse and gain some power back by reducing them in front of ethnic minorities, but at the same time the dominant discourse does not mind because what he is portraying is still a representation which is familiar and not threatening. It is a common constructed identity. This perhaps is

[16]For more information on comedian Russell Peters see: http://www.russellpeters.com/Biography.aspx

the best example of how the dominant discourse takes behaviors which are common and 'authentic' to the ethnic group and constructs an identity based on it. For Russell Peters for example when he discusses his Anglo Indian lifestyle as much as it is stereotypical in its depiction, a majority of the behaviors are true to the group. A difference is in exaggerations and travelling too far down the plane of identity from individual to common. An over exaggerated accent is playing with stereotype which forms part of the common identity. In the documentary it seems that there is a lot of back and forth travelling along this spectrum as comments as

> "Because it is not considered mainstream or canon are they being valorized in fullness or in continuing stereotypes. (It) is fine to appreciate Italian cuisine it is not Italo Canadian culture dangerous to see as self contained ethnicities with colorful folkloric aspects as opposed to evolving ambiguous things without different" (Enigmatico)

show a more individual identity which attempts to look at identity from a non superficial viewpoint to the film ending with at painter Vince Mancuso painting his family together having supper and eating, like all good Italians do.

What visual media representations do is give a face to the stereotype, and at times that face is embraced by the community. This medium attempts to give viewers an illustration as to what the Italian Canadian community is like, and how they define themselves and their culture. To conclude this analysis it is important to look at the idea of community. Not simply an Italian Canadian community but to look at the context of ethnic communities in this current bicultural system to how ethnic communities exist within these contexts. Within this context we can identify certain sentiments shared in the Italian

Canadian community identity and culture in Canada, which gives us insight into the identity of this cultural group.

Chapter 4: Ethnic Community

The attitudes and response to current conceptions of what Italian Canadian identity and culture are, can no better be revealed than through the community. With print media it is possible to examine the general reaction of society and their attitudes towards multiculturalism.

Communities in context

First in order to look at the context it is important to examine through the media society's perception of multiculturalism and what consequences that perception has on the identity of the immigrant. A series entitled "Identities" was conducted by Jeff Heinrich of the Montreal Gazette during the "Reasonable Accommodation" debate in Quebec the past year (2007). While the debate was sparked by accommodating individuals of Muslim origins and their integration into a small French community, the articles do not simply discuss accommodation of Muslims but of ethnics in a more general sense. The articles are based on data collected by the Léger Poll. The Poll was done in conjunction with the Association of Canadian Studies. [17] The series is interesting because it illustrates the politics of biculturalism at work. As previously established, Canada is a bicultural society ruled by the English and French. To see the reaction of one half of the dominating classes gives an idea as to the threat felt by a dominant discourse when faced with the presence of ethnic diversity. A positive fact to note is that it appears that younger Quebecers are more open to ethnic diversity. In the 18-24 range, 83% of individuals believe that immigrants should have a say in Quebec's future. This is important in terms of the power discourse. If younger generations believe that immigrants should be involved in decisions that affect the future of

[17] http://www.acs-aec.ca/_media/polls/11896246101669.pdf

Quebec, it means they are more open to immigrants being in positions of power. At the opposite end, individuals 65+ just 55% believe that they should be given a say. The generational gap that exists is caused by the fact that a large portion of these younger individuals are second generation Canadians. As seen in the literature, children born of immigrants have much stronger ties to Canada than to their ethnic origins. As well, younger people born from the dominant discourse are more susceptible to acceptance because they have grown up around diversity in school and society. The dangers that exist with an intolerant older discourse is that they still have an influence on some young people and their racists sentiments can still be passed on. However, the fact that there even exists a "Reasonable Accommodation" debate shows how the immigrant is still ruled by a dominating power. The fact that what is in debate are questions regarding how much immigrants can maintain of their own cultural practices demonstrates the ruling ability of the dominating discourse to debate and make decisions for individuals who are supposedly "free" in a "democratic" country, one which promotes a face of multiculturalism. The establishment of rules for someone to follow seems more fascist in practice. In Heinrich's article "Immigrants welcome-as long as they conform" he writes,

> "One in three people polled in Quebec society is under threat by the arrival of non-Christian immigrants, two out of five said Quebec society is changing too fast because of the minorities living here, and more than half said immigrants should abandon their customs and traditions and be more like the majority, the poll found. An even higher proportion – 58 per cent – said Quebec should adopt a "code of conduct" for minorities to follow when it comes to practicing their religion and

culture...The poll reveals a passive double standard: a large majority of Quebecers disapproves of open expressions of religion, unless it's Christian" [18]

The idea of abandoning one's customs and traditions is a manipulation of one's individual identity of that individual. Revisiting the concept of individual identity, customs and traditions brought by the immigrant is part of their individual identity. The sentiment shared in Quebec of having immigrants conform to a "majority" identity reinforces the concept of the general constructed identity. The individual will still always be ethnic and labeled as such, but their individual identity is replaced by a constructed one, which as mentioned in the article would be controlled further by a code of conduct. The individual dies in essence to live a constructed identity. For the Italian Canadian ethnicity is not as debated in Quebec as for a Muslim individual because they share a similar religious base. Italian Canadians are mostly Roman Catholic, as are French Canadians, and as such do not have to be concerned about being shunned for their religious beliefs. Nonetheless the discourse in question is that of an ethnic minority and Italian Canadians are ethnic minorities who as seen in Barbed Wire and Mandolins were taken prisoner from Montreal just as readily as they were from Toronto because they were not part of the majority. In part four of the series, Heinrich discusses specifically the idea of identity and how "ethnic minorities define themselves". In the article the idea of displacement in terms of isolation is identified. The initial question asked is, "What keeps immigrants and ethnic minorities isolated in Quebec?" According to the article, "Being unemployed, not speaking French and – perhaps surprisingly – not adopting the values of the majority of Quebec a poll has found. Those were the three 'obstacles to

[18] Heinrich, Jeff. "Immigrants welcome – as long as they conform; Most Quebecers against open expression of non-Christian religion." The Gazette .10 September 2007: A1. 11 Jan 2008.

integration' cited by 1,001 Quebecers surveyed by Léger Marketing for the Gazette."[19] It appears that the three reasons for not "fitting in" are vicious cycle at work that has the immigrant suffering. Employment without language is nearly impossible and if you do not share the values of those doing the hiring, than the possibility of being considered for a position is eliminated. The three reasons are reinforced by each other which create no opportunity for the immigrant to very well succeed. As such because language is an issue, immigrants tend to live in communities with those who share their background. Caterina Edwards' short story and play reflect this reality in which the Italian immigrants lived together in homes as well as communicated with other Italians because of the language issues. "In the latest poll, a slim majority, 53 per cent, also said immigrants and minorities who live in ghettos – neighborhoods where there's a heavy concentration of people of similar background – will have trouble fitting into mainstream society. And a near-majority, 48 per cent, said immigrants who simply maintain ties to their homeland in another country will also face difficulty". [20] First off, the fact that the newspaper needed to clarify the meaning of the word ghetto is indicative of the choice of word used. Ghetto is loaded with negative connotations. By saying that ethnic minorities live in ghettos we assume that they are poor and delinquent. This idea of the ghetto stands out in what Anselmi and Gouliamos call a "mosaic myth" (Mediating Culture, 120). In Mediating Culture The Politics of Representation, Anselmi and Gouliamos state,

> "The ghettoized communities live under the pretense of acknowledgement by the dominant discourse when mediators are imposed on those very communities. These mediators are often members of a given community who are selected to become

[19] Heinrich, Jeff. "Mainstream blind to integration efforts. Part 4 of our five day series, Identities." Montreal Gazette. 11 September 2007: A1. 11 Jan 2008.
[20] Ibid.

media agents, through the allocation of government funds, thus occupying power spaces. The notion of the mediator, or go-between, imposes a communicative system that, on the one hand, satisfies the working stereotype that the dominant system has strategically developed and, on the other hand, produces a working model for the member/s of that very community, a means of false self-representation (121)."

In this case, the ghetto functions as a micro society through the establishment of what is deemed reasonable accommodation. The individuals living here will have a sense of false self-representation as they will be required to live by certain rules established by the dominant discourse, and furthering the confusion of identity. Heinrich continues by saying, "Part of the problem of integration and how it's perceived is the question of identity. How immigrants and ethnic minorities define themselves – as Quebecers, as Canadians, as dual-nationals – as well as how the majority likes to pigeonhole them as outsiders, are key...Three in four Quebecers rank their ethnic group as third most-important connection" Therefore in Quebec we can identify the bicultural groups of francophone and non-francophones. Identity for francophones should be Quebecois first, Canadian second, and the respective ethnic group third. For Anglophones, it is Canadian's first, Quebecois' second and the ethnic group third. In all cases, in order to belong ones ethnicity finds a tertiary space in terms of who you are. The article also brings into play the idea of "diluting the majority" with ideas such as this passing through discussion one cannot help but think of the 1400's in Spain and the proving of pure bloodedness coming into play in the 21st century. So what are the conclusions after such an analysis? In the last part of the series "Identities" the type of society that is most sought after is a melting pot. [21]

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[21] Heinrich, Jeff. "Melting pot wins out as model for Quebec; Melting pot, multiculturalism, civic society: a look at three models of diversity – an dissent. Part 5 of our five day series, Identities." Montreal Gazette. 12 September 2007: A1. 11 Jan 2008.

Written media often has a different effect than does television or film in that effect of images is often a powerful tool in creating and forming opinions. Print media through magazines and newspapers tends to take on different positions depending on what political side they support. For example, newspapers such as the National Post and The Edmonton Journal tend to present a conservative standpoint and therefore despite the golden rule of journalism to remain unbiased, their articles and approach to certain issues is often biased towards a point of view supporting the dominant discourse. It is interesting to look at articles, stories and editorials that have to do with ethnic minorities and multiculturalism. An interesting quote in a published response to an article entitled "Canada's dirty little secret: We're a lot like Americans"[22] the writer describes the definition of a Canadian as, "someone who never tires of debating what constitutes "Canadian." And why that is not "American". If we look at the response entitled "What's a Canadian" the response consistently supports a binary system of representation when it comes to defining a Canadian. First by saying "What's a Canadian" we immediately look at its binary system as defining this is what a Canadian is not. Also discussing the difference between Canadians and Americans, she makes reference to "Both nations being born out of British and French Colonialism" Again the establishment of a bicultural foundation French or British. Therefore as a point of departure we can use this example to see how Canadians are defined in terms of a binary system of representation. This binary system is continuously seen. The topic of Multiculturalism and immigration is a highly debated one in Canadian media. In looking at visual documentaries of struggles for early Italian Canadians in defining an identity especially in Quebec we can analyze the current situation in which the policy of multiculturalism comes under debate.

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[22] Wainright, Kaitlin. "What's a Canadian? Re: Canada's dirty little secret: We're a lot like Americans, Sept 8". Ottawa Citizen . 11 September 2007: A13. 11 Jan 2008.

"Roundup: Multiculturalism loosing ground in Canada" an article from the Xinhua News Agency discusses a report which looks at how Canada is becoming a less tolerant of cultural diversity. First what is important to note is that the article comes from a foreign news agency. The Xinhua News Agency is the official press agency of the government of the People's Republic of China; as such the information printed is being reported on an international level. If news agencies are reporting that Canadian society (the model for cultural diversity), is becoming less tolerant of ethnic diversity the effects on the Canada's image in the international community is negative. The term that is often seen in articles reporting on ethnic tolerance is "accommodating". The word implies a certain power to the dominant discourse. To make an accommodation is having someone give a favor or allow someone to do something, giving power to one over another. What the article addresses is accommodation in different public spaces, like schools, hospitals, government buildings, and workplaces[23]. The article states, "The poll analysis reads: "By significant majorities in Canada as a whole, and by overwhelming majorities in Quebec, Canadians and Quebecers declare limits to reasonable accommodation."[24] What a statement like this implies is that English Canadians and Quebecers are the decision making groups in Canada. By reading between the lines we see that this reinforces the idea of the bicultural system and not a multicultural system with ethnics at the margins. With reference to Canada's Multicultural Act of 1971 which was to "...acknowledge the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage."[25] The article implies that the act has failed and what has happened is a movement that moves to assimilation. "...A series of incidents that happen lately indicate that those Canadians who believe multiculturalism is

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[23] "Roundup: Multiculturalism loosing ground in Canada." Xinhua News Agency 7 November 2007. 11 Jan 2008.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

synonymous with identity are losing ground over those who believe Canada's identity precedes and supersedes the notion of multiculturalism".[26] What the article is presenting is seemingly a vision that Canadian society wants a dominant discourse, be it English or French, establishing the rules to what makes up Canadian identity, and as such that the influence of ethnic identities on this Canadian identity should be minimized. The aforementioned idea of ethnic purity or "pur laine" which in the article is defined as "...people who can trace their ancestry back to the province's first French inhabitants..." do not want their "purity" of their identity to be diluted by the identities of ethnics. If purity means having an ancestry and being able to trace back roots, in the case of Italian Canadians it is ignorant to think that Italian Canadian roots have not been established over time with Italians immigrating and settling in Canada. The only difference is that they do not form part of one of the two dominant discourses of Canadian society, therefore their roots and ancestry in Canada is denied. As illustrated artistically by the poem "Canadese" by Antonino Mazza, the hope of having roots in Canada is the tie that will make the Italian Canadian belong, but according to our reality this still remains only a hope. The spokesperson for the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity states, "When we talk about Canadian identity, we talk about the common values we all share. They are democracy, fairness and human rights... We welcome immigrants. In ten years time, one in five Canadians will be a visible minority. And we need those immigrants, which is why we should celebrate our diversity."[27] Immigrants are discussed as commodities which are wanted for the economic good of the country; the face of Canadian identity as described by the State for Multiculturalism has no face but discusses values which are established by the dominant discourse. The discourse boils down to an 'us' versus 'them' approach; Canadians versus

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.

minorities. Bill Curry's article "Multiculturalism: Debate Proves Divisive 'Them and 'us' spreading nationwide, federal officials warn" [28] looks at the debate of "reasonable accommodation" spreading throughout Canada and is creating a stance placing the dominant discourses against the ethnic minorities. "There is now a sense of urgency to more clearly define and explain the principle of reasonable accommodation, as alarming shifts regarding the split between 'them' and 'us' may occur." This coming from an analysis by the Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage Judith LaRocque. The analysis came as a result of Jason Kenny's, the federal Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian identity, request that the matter of Quebec's debates on reasonable accommodation be evaluated. The split is an obvious issue, but for politicians such as Kenny and Prime Minister Harper, losing the label of multiculturalism is a blow to Canada's international image and a blow to the government's façade of including minorities in political decisions. "At the same time, Mr. Kenny and Prime Minister Stephen Harper are singing the praises of multiculturalism like never before. Mr. Kenny has twice cited a commitment to multiculturalism in the House this week to explain why the Prime Minister sent Rosh Hashanah greeting cards to Jewish Canadians". At the end of the day, votes are needed and ethnic votes are a large number which are up for grabs by politicians. The "ethnic outreach team" established by the Conservatives is a group which targets select ethnic and religious groups to upset the Liberals in the next election. [29] By using superficial cultural events, cards and the label of multiculturalism, the ruling party expects to continue keeping immigrants in a drug-like stupor, making them believe that they influence policy, when in fact the discourse continues to boil down to the bicultural politics which rule this country. The biggest fear for the

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[28] Curry, Bill. " Multiculturalism: Debate proves divisive 'Them' and 'us'split spreading nationwide, federal officials warn." The Globe and Mail 19 October 2007: A1. 11 Jan 2008.
[29] Ibid.

government in losing multiculturalism is losing ground in the international scene. In the opinion piece by Alidad Mafinezam, he looks at Canadian diversity and its effects in the world "Diversity can no longer be seen as limited to domestic affairs, as it now shapes, more than ever before, Canada's international relations." In this look, Canadian diversity according to Mafinezam only serves a selfish purpose, he states, "…this is a good time for Canada to optimally utilize the capacities that its diverse population afford us in the international arena." Again it is not a question of how can immigrants be better integrated into Canadian society without losing their identity or being reduced into a commodity, but how can we exploit them and this policy of Multiculturalism to better suit the needs of Canada's popularity and political power in the world. "Canada's increased influence will enable it to play a more active role in international conflict prevention and resolution." The importance lies not by looking inward and seeing what is wrong with our own society, but looking outward in order to portray ourselves in a positive light and selling "cultural" commodity as a model on a global scale. It is important that Canada maintain a strong presence on the international scene, but it is also necessary to acknowledge first what is needed in one's own backyard before attempting to fix the world's problems. "The challenge and promise of effective policy-making in Canada is to ensure that the global knowledge and ties of new Canadians are making available to Canada's international policy community. Only then can Canada fulfill its potential of becoming the world's think-tank, and the ideal home for crafting solutions for global challenges." The role of new Canadians as mentioned in the article also brings up the ongoing debate of loyalty in international politics. When we speak of multiple identities, at times this comes into conflict with international politics when conflicts arise in the homeland. The article "Is it time to close hotel Canada?" by William Kaplan appeared in Macleans magazine in 2006 and questions the loyalties of Canadian

citizens who possess dual citizenship with another country. In the article, he begins his discussion by looking at the role of Dr. Gino Bucchino, a Canadian citizen with a seat in Italian parliament who was elected to represent the interests of Italian citizens in Canada. While Kaplan himself does not outright disagree with the presence of Bucchino, he does discuss how this intervention became problematic for the 2006 election in Italy which according to former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi was decided by second and third generation Italians not born or even having lived in Italy. For the Italian Canadian hearing from their country that they should not be taken into account in terms of the future decisions of that country, it displaces them from their native country. At the same time Kaplan is noting that their loyalties, by having dual citizenship, are in question, which further displaces them from their new land. Kaplan continues to address situations in which individuals with dual citizenship have made the decision to have their loyalties lie with their native country instead of their new country, making them untrustworthy for Canadians[30]. The shift that occurs in the article is sudden because from a political discussion of elected foreign officials the argument quickly turns to terrorism and the volatile situation in Lebanon. The underlying argument which Kaplan finally arrives at is the fact that having dual citizenship becomes a financial burden on Canadian taxpayers when the dual citizenship card is used to be evacuated from a perilous situation. He specifically addresses Lebanese Canadians who were evacuated from Beirut in 2006 because they were Canadian citizens. He argues that these individuals are "Canadians of convenience" whom he believes only use Canada to their advantage but are not 'real' Canadians. He connects this idea with the fear that perhaps a

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[30] For more information on this discussion please see William Kaplan,. "Is it time to close hotel Canada?." Macleans 119.51 (25 Dec. 2006):20-23. Academic Search Complete. EBSCO. 14 February 2008. <http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=23462529&loginpage=login.asp&site=ehost-live&scope=site>

situation like Italy's election could arise in Canada, where Canadian citizens who are not 'real' Canadians could heavily influence our own election results. What the argument comes down to is a fear of damaging the current system of power, and an egotistical view of deciding which 'Canadians' are real enough to merit help from their government in addition to the concern that dual citizenship is an internal threat to "real" Canadians. These articles give us an insight into how society views Multiculturalism and ethnicity in communities. As a community, Italian Canadians, are very proud of their ancestry and continue to address questions regarding their identity and culture in Canada.

Italian Canadian Community

The Corriere Canadese is the only Italian language daily newspaper printed in Canada. It was started in 1954 by Dan Ianuzzi. The Corriere Canadese is a means to inform Italian Canadians about happenings in Italy as well as in the Italian Canadian community. It provides a voice to the Italian Canadian community and is an outlet to maintain ties with the homeland and with the language in that it is published in Italian, conversely its weekend paper "Tandem", is published in English and geared towards non Italian speaking Italian Canadians. What is important about these mediums is that they provide insight as to what Italian Canadians think themselves about identity and their culture in Canada. The debate differs depending on who the subjects questioned are, mainly one can identify those who live through a constructed identity as established by the dominant discourse, and those who still hold on to an individual identity and resist assimilation. In particular, there are a series of interviews and debates which look at how much Italian Canadian culture has been passed to the Anglophone mainstream culture and the Francophone culture in Quebec. Also ideas have

been circulated about having concrete institutions which would serve as sources and cornerstones for Italian Canadian culture. Three ideas came forward: A foundation that would promote Italian Canadian culture, a strengthening of the Frank Iacobucci Centre for Italian Canadian studies with the creation of a "Casa italiana" which would allow for more expression of culture, and the reopening of an indemnity fund for the internees of the Petawawa camps which would lead to a museum that would act as a centre for Italian Canadian studies. Any of these three endeavors while contributing on a simplistic level to the knowledge of Italian Canadian culture, does not look into the essence of what it is to be Italian Canadian or Italian Canadian identity. As a result of this debate about Italian Canadian culture, many in the Italian Canadian community took the opportunity to respond to these ideas as well as address issues about what it means to be an Italian Canadian.

Gianni Carparelli responds to this by writing that as a community we should and can do more. To the question, "Esiste la cultura italocanadese?" he answers,

> "Certo che esiste, perché gli italiani che sono venuti in Canada non si sono portati dietro solo la valigia di cartone, ma anche il loro bagaglio di tradizioni, abitudini, storia, idee. Avere mantenuto questo bagaglio è stato imporante perché ha impedito ad essi di "perdersi". Ma dobbiamo stare attenti a non considerare questo bagaglio come una statua da museo perché rischia di creare e perpetuare gli stereotipi del tipo italiani-spaghetti...La realtà è sempre dinamica e fluida. Possiamo allineare in un museo i reperti di un'epoca storica, ma nello stesso momento in cui inauguriamo quel museo, la comunità alla quale quella realtà fa riferimento è già cambiata...Tutto quello che finora è stato proposto (fondazione, Centro Iacobucci, museo) va tutto bene, tutto serve, certamente. Basta che non diventi quello che erano, una volta

almeno, gli Istituti Italiani di Cultura: centri di incontro per una minoranza detta èlite..."[31]

In the response by Carpelli we see an acknowledgement of the problems that can arise when institutes in minority communities attempt to define a culture or identity. As Carpelli states, the community's reality is constantly changing and trying to create a fixed identity of what is an Italian Canadian by housing them on display in a museum fails. Also, these institutions obtain their funding by an elite within the community. As we have seen before, those who are considered elite or have overcome the alienation of the dominant discourse, they have done so not by fighting the system but buying into the system. As such, the culture and identity that they portray of Italian Canadians is one that is familiar and in line with dominant discourse representation. Antonio D'Alfonso adds, "Annamaria Castrilli and Fabio Mastrangelo devono smettere di sognare un centro unico che faccia da ombrello per tutti gli italocanadesi" [32] Having Italian Canadians throughout Canada makes it physically impossible to have a unifying location to call the centre of Italian Canadian culture, and it becomes a dream to think that it is possible to have one centre. An interesting comment about the Italian community is made by a Domenico Russumanno,

> " I primi colpevoli della scarsa attenzione verso la cultura italocanadese (ammesso che esista) e italiana (quella vera, che comprende anche le feste e le canzonette ma non si esaurisce in questo) siamo noi stessi, che non sproniamo i nostri politici a portare avanti i nostri interessi culturali e che ci accontentiamo di un picnic con musica una volta ogni tanto. Dovremmo capire che il problema non sta nel lanciare un'ennesima iniziativa d'elite (perché l'elite ha già una cultura ricca e profonda), né sta nell'avviare ancora un altro festival campestre (perché ce ne sono già a

[31] http://www.corriere.com/viewstory.php?storyid=684. 19 Jan 2008.
[32] http://www.corriere.com/viewstory.php?storyid=683. 19 Jan 2008.

sufficienza). Il problema è coinvolgere quanti più italocanadesi possibile in un processo di approfondimento e potrebbe dire che occorre "educare" la communità italocanadese". [33]

Italian Canadians do have some blame to take in defining what Italian Canadian culture is due to the fact that we in the community tend to simply take what those who are in charge of community groups have to offer as being Italian Canadian culture. One can agree with the opposing comments to having institutionalized sources that define what or who is an Italian Canadian and like Russumanno states, become more educated because the only options that are offered are superficial definitions and expression of culture through festivals which are offered by an elite core of Italian Canadians, who as previously stated are content to stay on the surface of our identity and reinforce the constructed identities established by the dominant discourse. Ann Summers Dossena, a prominent figure in the Arts and Music industry, married an Italian film director, Armando Dossena, and has spent a significant time in Italy herself. Obviously an individual with influence, she proposes that Italian Canadians should fight for their own identity and could do this through a foundation. When asked what she though Italians contributed to Canada she responded,

"La loro umanità. Lei non sa cos'era Toronto prima della grande immigrazione italiana. Era una città provinciale, bigotta. Gli italiani le hanno insegnato a sorridere, ad essere tollerante, gentile. Ma soprattutto le hanno regalato la più preziosa delle loro richezze: la solidarietà. Nessun Paese ha dato, non solo al Canada ma al mondo intero, quanto ha dato l'Italia. Se poi a tutto questo aggiungiamo la cultura,

[33] http://www.corriere.com/viewstory.php?storyid=672 19 Jan 2008.

comprenderà che l'idea di una fondazione non solo è sacrosanta, oggi, ma doveva venire prima" [34]

Her points come from a very privileged space. She a member of the dominant discourse married into the Italian culture, and still takes from it only what is not threatening to the dominant discourse. She says that Italians taught Torontonians to smile and tolerance after the first wave of immigration, but where were the smiles and tolerance when Italian Canadians were sent off to Petawawa. To have a foundation controlling this image simply reinforces this narrow vision of what is Italian Canadian identity. Yet individuals like Dossena make up that very elite that have control in the Italian Canadian community, which destroys itself because it continues to reinforce the vision and identity established and controlled by the dominant discourse. In an interview with the Consol General of Italy in Toronto in 2001, Francesco Scarlata answered the question of how much weight has the Italian way of life held in Canada is: "Non è possible quantificarlo, ma è un peso rilevante: dall'alimentazione all'abbligliamento, al design, a tutti i piccoli o grandi atteggiamenti quotidiani, questa influenza si vede." [35] Therefore in Canada eating a bowl of pasta, wearing Prada shoes, or using a Moka Bialetti designed stove top espresso maker on a daily basis constitutes the Italian contribution to Canadian lifestyle according to one of the most powerful figures on the Italian Canadian scene. Language also plays an important role in the community. In an article by Jana Zocco entitled, "The Languages of Italian Canadians" she looks at the status of the Italian language in Canada. Individuals have at their disposal two types of language one is a "dialect-based variety that is used at home, with the family, the other, Italian-based (for those with a certain knowledge of Italian) which is used in situations of contact between different dialect-based varieties" (Zocco 514). What this causes within

[34] http://www.corriere.com/viewstory.php?storyid=689. 19 Jan 2008.
[35] http://www.corriere.com/viewstory.php?storyid=698. 19 Jan 2008.

the community are struggles with power relations and class. A person who does not have the opportunity to learn standard Italian in Canada is called "Italo-Canadian" (Zocco 514) and is seen as inferior and ignorant because they do not have a knowledge of the language which has more prestige in comparison to a regional dialect. Regarding the state of Italo-Canadian language, Zocco states, "The idealization of Italo-Canadian is also due to the low status of the dialects, which have for centuries been disregarded as vernaculars without any grammar, prestige or culture. Thus, to call the language of the wider community *Italo-Canadian* is to give it more prestige" (515). For the individual that speaks a dialect more 'correct' or a more standard type of language their own prestige or status will grow. In other words, within the ethnic group community there exists a differentiation of classes. This group divides itself in the hierarchy of power according to the influence of language; those who speak dialect more standard based, like a Tuscan dialect, would find themselves higher on the scale of power. Meanwhile those who do not have a sufficient knowledge of their own standard language will be lower on this scale. Therefore, within the community there exits displacement through language, and in terms of their relations with the dominant discourse, the willingness to learn English or French, depending on which dominant discourse is in question, those who speak the dominant language will have more opportunities than those who do not. What can occur is double displacement. Within the community they are inferior due to not knowing standard Italian, and in society they remain at the margins because they do not know the dominant language. Language therefore becomes a tool of inclusion and exclusion. Zocco includes a definition for 'italiano popolare' based on a definition by DeMauro: "Il modo d'esprimersi di un incolto che, sotto la spinta di comunicare e senza addrestamento, maneggia quella che…si chiama la lingua 'nazionale'" (qtd. in Zocco 516). If the language in discussion is an 'italiano popolare' it shows an ambiguity in language. At the same time we could add

another definition of the Italian language, "(Cortelazzo's definition)...italiano popolare can be seen (if it refers to those speakers whose formal study of Italian is interrupted at a certain point as interlanguage...). Interlanguage is a linguistic term that describes the language of those who are learning a second language and is developing with the influence of the maternal language and the second language. If we call l'italiano popolare an interlanguage the language loses its power and position because in reality it is a language which does not really exist and even as language it is displaced.

Finally, what tends to occur in ethnic communities is recognition by the dominant discourse through fairs as seen in Edmonton, Heritage Days, which present the culture simply by food, dance and as a spectacle. Acknowledgement through events such as these, are considered a form of adequate accommodation for the expression of culture and ethnicity. Florence Loyie's article, "Celebration of Italian-Canadian life unveiled; Column tells a story for future generations about the pioneers who brought a slice of Italy to Alberta". [36] In Edmonton, acknowledge for the Italian Canadian community came in the form of a monument which is "to honour the work and lives of Italian immigrants in Alberta in the last 100 years" (Loyie) Funding was given to the Italian Canadian community to acknowledge their contribution to Alberta in its hundred year history, and a design was chosen for a three metre tall monument designed by Edmontonian Giuseppe Albi, who won the contest out of twenty one nation wide entries. The monument contains at the base, bronzed 'artifacts' which were collected from the Italian community "representing their culture and some of the occupations of their ancestors when they arrived in Alberta" (Loyie). The artifacts chosen were: a soccer ball, a pick axe, a bottle of wine, a wood planer, a shoemaker's tools, a merchant's scoop and a violin (Loyie). The presence of the following artifacts act as a

[36] Loyie, Florence. "Celebration of Italian-Canadian life unveiled." The Edmonton Journal 28 October 2007: A14. 11 Jan 2008.

reminder for Italian Canadians of what they are and what they are identified by. There is no aspiration for the future, but to reduce the contributions of Italian Canadians in Alberta to inanimate objects is a commodification of the ethnic group. Finally, the semantics around the placing of the statue are interesting as well. Loyie writes, "The three-metre-tall monument…stands on the northwest corner of the Alberta legislature grounds…" The Northwest corner of the grounds is behind the actual legislature building, therefore the statue stands always behind and in the shadows of the institution of power in the province.

Concluding Remarks

The scope of this analysis is to allow one to see not only different identities present within the minority discourse, but also to contextualize it and see the fluidity of different identities that are constructed within the discourse of multiculturalism. This dynamic state that exists for both the ethnic minority and the dominant discourse leads to dialogue in which mainstream society poses questions regarding accommodation and the worth of an immigrant's contribution to Canadian society, while immigrants too pose questions regarding their space within the society and what their contributions to the country are. It is important to note that within this analysis the attention is not only given to a simple label or representation but the issues go further into a discourse which touches upon the context in which we live and relations of power at work within this society which affects all individuals. The nature of the analysis shows the many components in its composition, that constitute critical work (which attempts to demystify the constructed representations at work), artistic reflection (a means of self-representation from a common migratory experience which present and question the identities of minorities), media input (a visual and widespread means of presenting the minority discourse from both a dominant and minority point of view), and community relations (a contemporary account of the greater Canadian viewpoint of ethnicity and that of the specific minority community as an active participant in society). However, the topic in question lends itself to a discourse of multiciplity, one could even say of 'fragmentation'. There is no one answer to the question of identity, the many answers that exist can be found and become engaged by looking at the multiple and fragmented reality in which identity is constructed. In the end it cannot be denied that the construction of identity is linked to the politics of displacement which again in conjunction with the hierarchy of power creates a dynamic of competition for positioning one's self, one's group within our

contemporary society. All individuals regardless of ethnicity find themselves in a struggle for positioning within our public spheres, be it as children in a school yard or adults in the job market, but for minorities there is a defined line and common experience where the struggle for acceptance begins – from pre-emigration to post-emigration. Individuals are caught between an individual identity which marginalizes them and a constructed identity which creates the illusion of accommodation but still keeps the immigrant alienated from the spheres of power. These individuals often times comply with the accommodations set by a dominant discourse and lose their individual identity because they are told that this is the smoothest way to find a place within society, yet remaining on the margins, find themselves still displaced. Their space in the public view is often subjugated to one of familiar representation through commodities such as food and spectacle which creates a breeding ground for acceptance and reinforcement of stereotypes within the discourse of manageable multiculturalism. Obviously the topic is conflictual in nature, but at the same time it gives us an understanding of how the identity of a minority group is reduced by a social construction and political management. Perhaps through understanding how this construction occurs we could arrive at a point where the politics of Multiculturalism established by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 and continued today through the Department of Multiculturalism, could make way for discussions where the displacement that occurs decreases as a mechanism of socio-political. What is dictated on paper as "Multiculturalism" and what multiculturalism is as a lived reality are very different. As can be seen, the goal of such a policy is to create a mosaic of cultures united in one society, yet as illustrated by the Italian Canadian case it is not possible to create the dichotomy of 'Canadian' and 'Ethnics', because all ethnic minorities are complex, dynamic groups that cannot be labeled into one category. Italian Canadian identity cannot be defined as one thing, but its shape will continue

to change and travel along between individual and constructed identities continuously vying for a place in society and for the respect it merits as a contributing group to Canadian culture.

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